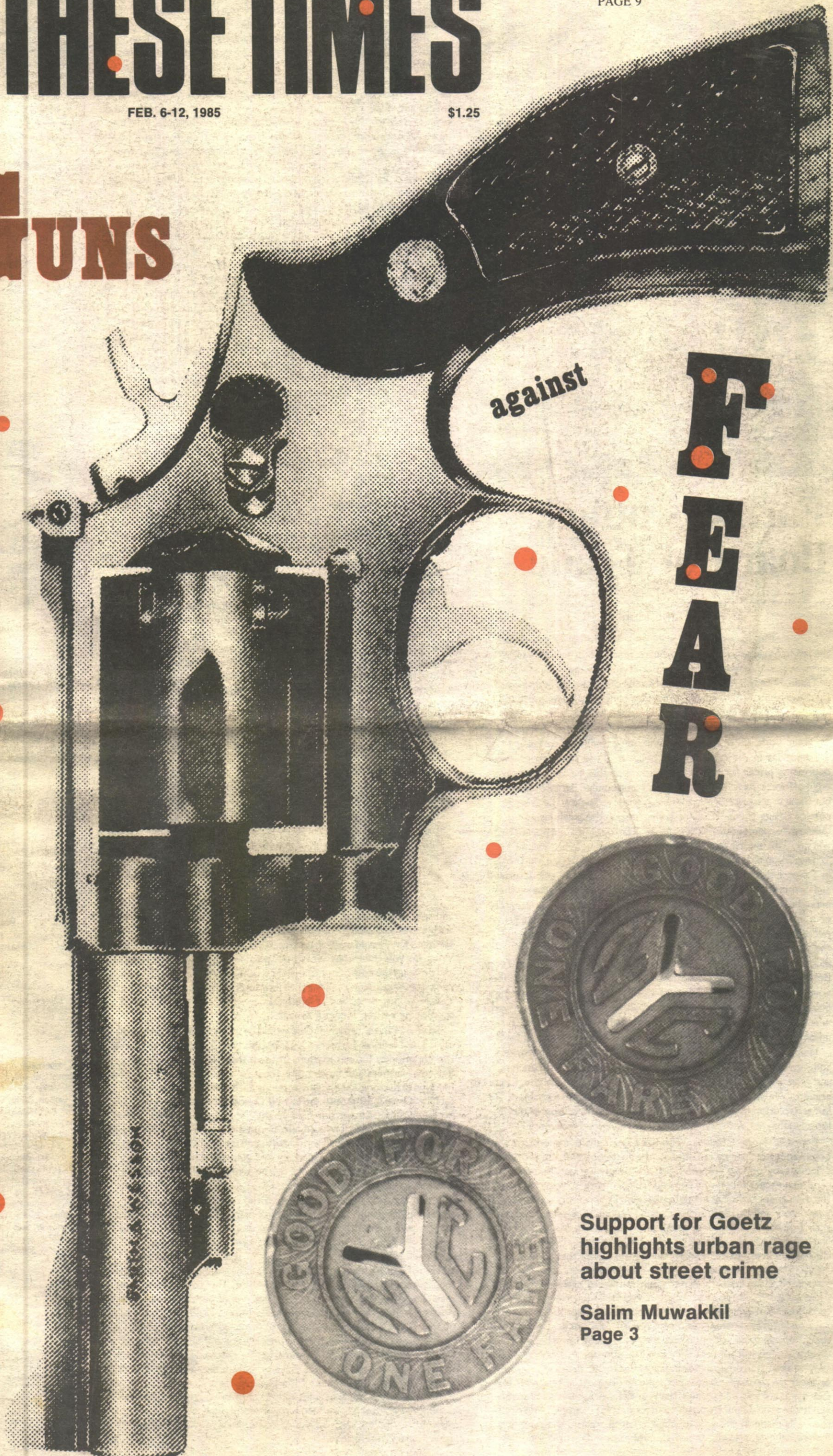


## GUNS



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Support for Goetz  
highlights urban rage  
about street crime

Salim Muwakkil  
Page 3





Marc Pokempner

# Farmers attack Board of Trade

By David Moberg

Bucklin, Mo., farmer Jerry Parks, who lost half a million dollars in the last five years raising corn, soybeans, milo and cattle on his 1,200 acres, was standing in the subzero cold outside the Chicago Board of Trade. Nearly 300 farmers and a handful of urban supporters were there with him. A few dozen were getting peaceably arrested in their symbolic effort to stop the frenzied trading in the "pits," where fortunes are quickly made and lost by speculators betting that prices on grain, pork, silver or other commodities will rise or fall.

Like many in the crowd, Parks believed those speculators were depressing prices for his products so much that he was now on the edge of foreclosure. Bad weather had compounded Parks' problems, but the average price of major grains now is well below the average cost of raising them. "They're trying to put the small farmer out of business," he lamented. "When the small farmer goes, corporate farms will say, 'This is what you pay.'"

The Chicago demonstration on January 21 was only one loud note in a crescendo of cries from the farm belt. It is aptly characterized as a Groundswell (the name of a Minnesota farmer-labor alliance that brought more than 10,000 to the state capitol also on January 21) or a Prairie Fire (the name of a new Iowa-based group that grew out of the work of Rural America). The week before 300 farmers in the Capitol gallery stood silently with signs calling for a debt moratorium and state of economic emergency during Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad's state of the state message. Non-farmers are adding their voices: Operation PUSH endorsed the Chicago commodity exchange protests, and Central Missouri Labor Council president Charles Pearl, who has promoted a farmer-labor alliance in his state, solicited Chicago union support.

Helping farmers thrive will put implement manufacturing workers and steelworkers back on payrolls, save faltering banks and retailers, and generally stimulate the economy, protest organizer Wayne Cryts argued. "We've got to get people to deal with us not as a problem but as a solution to the problem," he told the farmers, most of them loosely affiliated with the American Agriculture Movement.

Board of Trade Chairman Thomas Cunningham argued that the commodity exchanges in Chicago, the focal point of the worldwide price-setting on key commodities, are simply "price discovery" systems that reflect supply and demand. The protesters "want to shoot the messenger" who has brought bad tidings of poor prices for several years. Founded in 1848 but expanding rapidly in recent years, the Board of Trade at its most useful provides sellers of a commodity like wheat a chance to lock in a price for future delivery, avoiding the risk of a lower price by surrendering the chance that prices might go up. On the other hand, a buyer—like a grain dealer—may be interested in reverse "hedging" against a future price increase.

Speculators sell (go short) or buy (go long) futures contracts (promises to deliver some specified quantity of a commodity). They have no interest in the grain itself, just the contracts. They gamble that they can later sell contracts they've bought for a higher price or that prices will fall, and they can buy contracts to cover what they've already promised to sell. They must maintain a cash reserve—or margin—to cover losses, but the requirement is relatively low. Contracts are sold many times: last year the average bushel of soybeans was involved in 38 purely paper transactions, for example. And of all the deals made in the pits—where agitated traders shouting and flashing hand signals jump at each quarter-cent shift in prices, hoping

Nearly 300 farmers protested at the Chicago Board of Trade.

to place their bets correctly on shifts in the market—only 3 percent actually involved a transfer of real goods.

Some farmers like Cryts see this speculative paper shuffling and sale of commodities no one yet possesses as the mechanism that drives down prices through a glut of phantom bushels of wheat. Most economists disagree. They see speculators only as sources of liquidity, people with cash to grease profitably the wheels of commerce, with sellers and buyers always in balance. But John Helmuth, agricultural economist with the House Committee on Small Business, offered persuasive evidence that at least "the live cattle futures market is not operating as an efficient price discovery mechanism, and that this market is operating with a consistent, systematic, predictable downward bias." As cattle prices begin to rise, big commercial feeders, grain companies and meat packers sell futures that soon depress the market. (They can then buy back those futures at a lower price and make a profit.) Even more questionable, officers of those companies and traders for their brokerage firms also short sell and make a killing. In the 16-month period of Helmuth's study, a group of 32 closely-linked traders made \$110 million in profit, 70 percent of all profit made by large traders in that period largely through such inside dealing.

Helmuth doubts that the grain futures markets are as "inefficient," that is, unfair and open to downward price manipulation, as cattle futures. But there is pressure to regulate the commodity markets more closely—prohibiting dual or inside trading, setting higher margin requirements and generally submitting commodity speculation to many of the restrictions imposed on stock speculation after the crash of 1929. But the freewheeling commodity traders—who are now more interested in trading futures on Treasury notes than in soybeans—fight regulation tooth and nail, contribute heavily to the politicians who supposedly oversee them and, in the words of two *Wall Street Journal* reporters, so control appointment to the decade-old Commodity Futures Trading Commission that the "commodities watchdog is often more like a friendly puppy."

"You've got to get in line to hate the Board of Trade," quips Marty Strange, director of the Center for Rural Affairs in Nebraska. "It's just a way for speculators and money-changers to drain money out of the system, just a way to steal profit—and they do.... It's a very large gambling casino." But despite his own feelings, he cautions that the commodity exchanges are not the main problem for farmers and warns "rational debates about the value of the Board of Trade get lost in right-wing fundamentalist trash about the Federal Reserve and the international Jewish banking conspiracy.... The right-wing stuff that's cropped up in the last six months is really discouraging."

The problem may be less the futures trading, or any number of less-plausible conspiracies, and more the market system itself. Helmuth says farmers now operate much like auto workers would if their wages were not set by contract but by a futures market in labor that fluctuated day to day. "We would get paid at the end of each day at whatever rate the futures determined," he said in a speech to Kansas wheat growers. "The futures price would be determined by hedgers

## THE STORY INSIDE

and speculators. Auto company officers could speculate in futures with inside knowledge of how many contracts their company was selling.... They could trade in unlimited amounts of our labor contracts. What do you think they would do? Would they buy the contracts and drive up the cost of our labor? Or would they sell contracts and keep our wages down? ...What I've just described is not a free market. What I've just described is exploitation. What I've just described is the pricing system for your wheat."

So what's the alternative? One would be to form a union, Helmuth says. The National Farmers Organization (NFO) already by-passes the commodity futures market. Instead, they negotiate contracts between farmers and buyers, like meatpackers, that serve the same function as hedging, that is, guaranteeing each side some price predictability. Over a 50-month period NFO hog contracts in Iowa have averaged about \$3 per hundredweight (or about 6 percent) above the market average. It would also be possible to expand the use of "marketing orders," which are already used for a number of products like lemons and oranges, especially in California. Under the law, producers could devise their own methods of controlling marketing or production to stabilize prices.

Yet even with such alternatives to the commodity exchanges, government action is needed to stabilize prices. Most left/liberal farm groups favor a federal loan program that would support prices at the cost of production, not at the current low levels. That would be combined with an aggressive program of soil conservation and a system of "supply management" (such as either voluntary or mandatory "set-asides" of land out of production). The government would maintain an "ever-normal granary" that would be used to control prices for both farmers and consumers (who would pay only a few pennies more per loaf of bread if wheat prices to farmers doubled).

The futures market thrives on uncertainty and instability. With a stabler farm economy and new marketing mechanisms for farmers, its role would probably decline. But Agriculture Secretary John Block, telling farmers they will have to "tough it out" as price supports are cut further and the market rules all, is heading in exactly the opposite direction—greater chaos, instability, hardship and bankruptcy in agriculture rippling over to the adjacent small town and urban economies. Grim futures.

## IN THESE TIMES

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IN THESE TIMES

# Crime: is self-defense the best defense?

By Salim Muwakkil

**N**O CHARGES HAVE BEEN FILED against the four youths shot by Bernard H. Goetz in the infamous "subway vigilante" incident. Troy Canty, 19, James Ramseur, 18, and Barry Allen, 18, were all treated for minor injuries and released. Darrel Cabey, 19, is in critical condition with a severed spinal cord. He has lapsed into a coma and is breathing only with the aid of a respirator. Goetz, who emptied his .38-calibre pistol into the bodies of his alleged tormentors (shooting two in their backs as they fled), is also not being charged with anything connected to the shootings.

Since no charges were brought, in a strictly legal sense nothing actually happened in that New York subway car last December 22. But, like the vacuum in the center of a tornado, that legal "non-event" has churned up a furious debate. Issues of crime and punishment, self-defense, race and class are involved here...in short, the very future of urban life in this country.

By some people's reckoning, the incident simply added up to four black men being injured and a white man being canonized for doing it, an outcome that, in their view, is tragically echoed in this country's racist history. "What kind of hero shoots people in the back?" asks the Reverend Herbert Daughtry, chairman of the National Black United Front (NBUF). His New York-based group and several others have initiated a campaign to raise money for the family of the critically injured Cabey, and have asked the federal government to prosecute Goetz under civil rights laws.

But it's a safe bet that most people don't share Daughtry's concerns. The grand jury certainly didn't. Although Goetz reportedly admitted in a video-taped confession that he had intended to kill the four youths and only stopped firing when he exhausted his supply of bullets, the 23-member grand jury refused to indict him on charges of attempted murder. He was charged only with criminal possession of weapons. Goetz's attorney, Joseph Kelner, said the grand jury's decision was "a reflection of the community's attitude toward fear that the people of this city and nation and state are living under."

Richard Emery, staff counsel of the New York Civil Liberties Union, agrees with Kelner that the social mood was the determining factor in the ruling, but he doesn't think it's such a good thing.

"The process of justice has been completely overshadowed by the politics of the moment," Emery contends. He charges that District Attorney Robert Morgenthau suppressed evidence by refusing to grant immunity to any of the four youth involved. "That would have allowed their side of the story to be considered by the grand jury. As it stands, all the evidence wasn't presented, so we'll actually never know what really happened on that subway car."

If letters to the editor and call-ins to talk shows are any gauge, the public feels it already knows enough: a man who was threatened by criminals resisted and turned the tables on his assailants. He is a hero, and the fine points are irrelevant. Some,

like Jimmy Breslin of the *New York Daily News*, argue that public approval of Goetz is fueled by a not-so-hidden racism. But, according to most reports, blacks are also overwhelmingly pro-Goetz.

Roy Innis, national chair of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), has consistently praised Goetz's actions and hailed the grand jury's decision as one that "reaffirmed the fundamental human right of self-defense. I congratulate the grand jury...for being more concerned with justice and the real emergency we face, the emergency of crime and domestic terrorism."

## The specter of criminal anarchy.

Although most official figures indicate that crime may have actually decreased in recent years, the general public's perception is that crime is increasing. Combine this with the widespread belief that the courts and police offer little protection from criminals and you have a society that is growing terrified at the specter of criminal anarchy.

"To those who still maintain that nobody should take the law into his own hands, it should be pointed out that, under the present situation, it is the hoodlums who have the law in their hands," wrote Chicagoan Marty Serbivick in a letter to the editor in the *Chicago Tribune* that fairly typifies the public reaction. "Because the courts have so restrained the police that they are presently unable to adequately protect the public, society has no alternative but to defend itself in the only way left to it.... Viva Goetz!"

This unassuming, 37-year-old engineer has become a national symbol of resistance to crime. And though Goetz disclaims the vigilante label, he embodies the spirit and his actions harmonize perfectly with the tenor of the times. "Historically, when the law fails or is perceived to have failed the needs of the citizens, martial law and vigilance committees have taken over," says Roger D. McGrath, a UCLA history professor and author of *Gunfighters, Highwaymen and Vigilantes: Violence on the Frontier*. He said the widespread expressions of support for Goetz's armed resistance are perfectly consistent with historical developments.

But according to Richard Block, a Loyola University sociologist who has recently completed an extensive study of crime victimization patterns, emulating Goetz's actions may only make matters worse. "My studies have shown that when a crime victim exhibits forceful resistance to an armed assailant, the likelihood of injury is increased," Block reveals. "In Goetz's case the intended victim was armed and the offenders were not. In that kind of situation the intended victims may occasionally win. But even then, it's only occasionally."

## Upping the ante.

Block argues that one unintentional consequence of this new emphasis on armed self-defense will be to "up the ante" for the criminal. Robbers are rational, he contends, and if the news reaches them that more people are arming themselves, they'll either become more heavily armed, change their mode of operation to lessen the chance of armed confrontation—they may shoot first—or go down the scale to prey on more

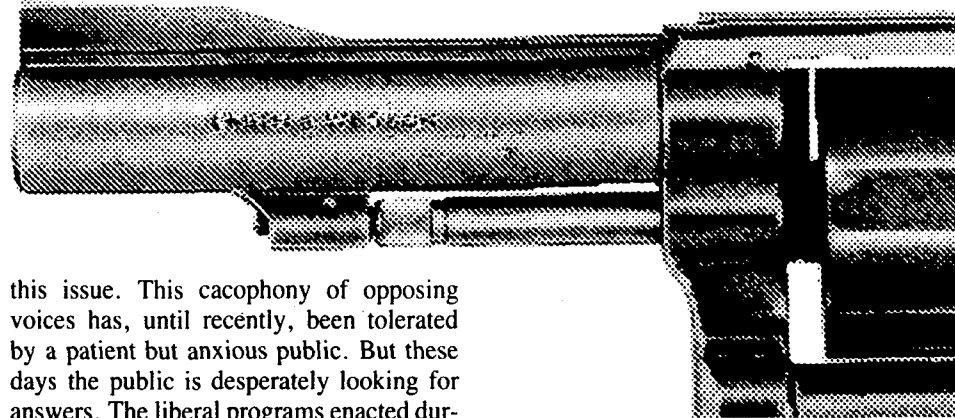
vulnerable victims, those less likely to offer resistance.

"I don't want to throw any cold water on this outrage against the high levels of victimization that is occurring in today's society," Block says. "But, while I understand the fears and frustrations of crime in our cities, I have to point out that the Goetz solution just won't do much good for potential victims."

Harold Brown is one potential victim who disagrees with Block. Brown, a 68-year-old plumber from Chicago's West Side, recently shot and killed an armed 18-year-old who, with an accomplice, had attempted to rob him as he walked near his home with a bag of groceries. "If I didn't use my gun, I wouldn't be here now," he explains. Brown, who is black, as were his two assailants, was charged with nothing, even though it was initially reported that his gun was unregistered.

Such selective non-enforcement of the law may have some civil libertarians worried, but their protests are being muffled by the enormous groundswell of anti-crime sentiments. "How could a 68-year-old man defend himself against two teenagers without a gun?" McGrath asks. "To say he had the right to defend himself and then to punish him for possessing the very thing that provided him with defense wouldn't have made much sense to me."

McGrath contends that an armed citizenry is the best defense against crime, while Block's studies have convinced him that potential victims who arm themselves may be asking for injury. The conflicting arguments of these well-schooled observers exemplify the great diversity of opinion on



this issue. This cacophony of opposing voices has, until recently, been tolerated by a patient but anxious public. But these days the public is desperately looking for answers. The liberal programs enacted during the last two decades have not delivered and many people feel betrayed.

"In 1945 people believed that prosperity, abolition of law and customs that segregated the races and discriminated against nonwhites and humane prisons set in a compassionate social system would reduce crime," wrote Roger Starr in a recent article on crime in the *New York Times Magazine*. "The public policies that emerged and resulted in more of these good things than many thought possible in 1945 have revealed one thing: crime not only continues, it grows. Its rate is affected not merely by

economic conditions or governmental policies, but by community and family traditions. Socially acceptable behavior is not instinctual, but learned."

Starr argues that contemporary crime is different from the immigrant-inspired crime that beset the cities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and that until society begins devising specific strategies to combat this peculiar species of crime, it will continue to grow and eventually threaten the very existence of urban life. It will also continue to generate desperate calls for more radical solutions to the problem.

## The issue of race.

Since black Americans are so inordinantly represented in national crime statistics, the issue of race is inevitable in discussions of crime in the U.S. According to anthropologist Marvin Harris' 1982 *America Now: The Anthropology of a Changing Culture*, "A study of arrests in 17 large American cities located in every region of the country conducted under the auspices of the President's Commission on the Causes of Crime and Prevention of Violence indicated that

the race of the offender was black in 72 percent of criminal homicides, 74 percent of aggravated assaults, 81 percent of unarmed robbers, and a whopping 85 percent of armed robberies." Harris also reported that most of the victims were black.

It seems clear that any program seeking to combat crime should concentrate directly on the segment of the population that is most victimized by it. Yet most black leaders have generally been unwilling to focus on crime as a special issue of concern. Black crime is inordinant because blacks

*Continued on page 8*



# IN SHORT

## Corporate historicity

The Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC)—known primarily for its four-year consumer boycott against the Campbell Soup Company to force it to the bargaining table—has increased the pressure on the food processor with a “corporate campaign” that began late last November. According to Baldemar Velasquez, the president of the migrant workers’ advocacy group, FLOC must now “go to friends who can put pressure on Campbell” by putting pressure on the three financial concerns that share directors with Campbell: the Philadelphia National Bank, the Prudential Life Insurance Company and the Equitable Life Insurance Company. R. Gordon McGovern, president of Campbell, is on the board of directors of the Philadelphia National Bank and CoreStates—the bank’s parent company that has 1.7 million shares in Campbell stock. Prudential shares Robert Beck with Campbell, and Equitable has Andrew Lewis tied into the Campbell board. With the help of Ray Rodgers and Ed Allen of Corporate Campaign, FLOC organizers have been identifying shareholders in the three targets and asking for their support in their fight against the food processor that netted \$200 million in profits last year and showed no willingness to negotiate with the farmworkers group.

So far one handy friend has surfaced. Bishop Jesse De Witt of the United Methodist Church says that they have \$32 million in pension funds with Equitable that may be weighty leverage if the Methodists’ Board of Pensions okays its use as a bargaining tool. And Velasquez feels sure that the pressure is beginning to “flush McGovern out of his office.” Campbell’s president has recently had to defend one of Campbell’s abuses of the migrant workers by claiming that child labor was a “time-honored tradition” in the Hispanic community.

## City heat

The owners of the Playskool toy factory in Chicago, threatening to pull up stakes and move to Massachusetts, struck a deal with the city of Chicago last week that leaves most of the workers and involved community groups satisfied. In return for the city dropping its lawsuit against Playskool (see *In These Times*, December 5), Hasbro Bradley agreed to keep the Chicago plant open and 100 of the 638 workers on the job until November. In the meantime, former Chicago Bear Gayle Sayers has been the star of a media blitz that touts the skill and dependability of the displaced workers and offers a \$500 hiring incentive per worker to businesses. A fund of \$300,000 has been set up for the ad campaign and rehiring, with an additional \$50,000 earmarked for medical or emergency needs of the workers.

## When in Rome...

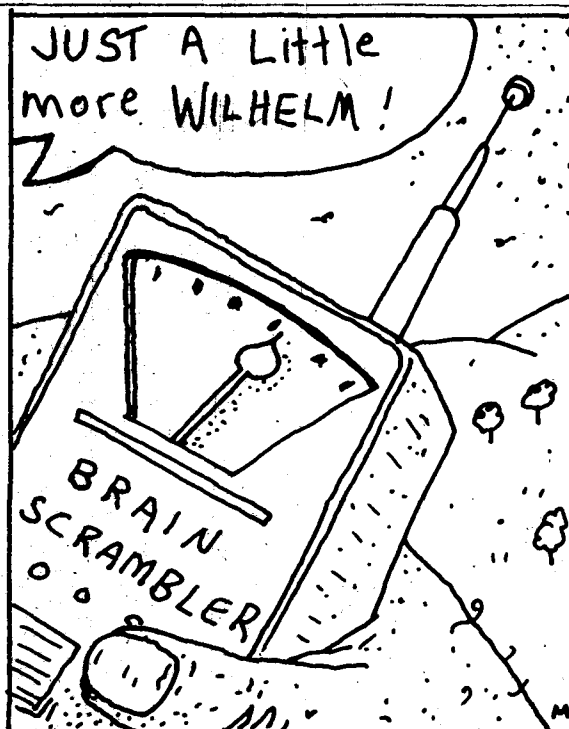
A couple of weeks ago, Greece’s anti-NATO feelings were exacerbated by the NATO Defense College’s mock exercise of a coup in Athens replete with the Greek military—backed by “foreign agents”—ousting an elected left prime minister. Greece pulled three officers and students out of the military college in Rome for the “insult.” According to the Athens News Agency last week, NATO’s Military Committee, though hardly offering a profuse apology, did admit that there were some “irregularities” in the exercises and assured Greek National Defense General Nikolaos Kouris that the incident wouldn’t be repeated in the future. Last week the director of the Defense College was at NATO headquarters in Brussels trying to ease the increasingly tense feelings between Greece and NATO.

## The final frontier

When the space shuttle *Discovery* landed last week after completing its “first strictly military mission,” Americans were, of course, only getting a taste of the close relationship between NASA and the Pentagon. In the January 4 *Science* magazine, R. Jeffrey Smith tracks down a few more clues to how symbiotic the civilian and the military agencies have been during NASA’s 26-year history. From the beginning the needs of the military have dictated fundamental design aspects of the shuttle: the unusually large wings, rugged thermal protection, a payload bay that’s larger than necessary for civilian research purposes and the extraordinarily powerful engines built to haul heavy military equipment. And some of NASA’s most sophisticated equipment has worked just as hard for army intelligence as it has for civilian researchers, including a radar capable of penetrating cloud cover, vegetation and even the earth’s surface to the depth of one meter. And now NASA is spending \$350 million for lighter booster rockets to help lift heavy military equipment.

NASA has bamboozled the public into thinking that it’s a civilian agency, but that just ain’t so, says Smith. The General Accounting Office has concluded that in recent years as much as 20 percent of the civilian budget supports the Pentagon’s use of the shuttle. And with the latest NASA estimates claiming that 30 percent of the shuttle’s flights over the next 10 years will be solely military missions, that figure is bound to climb sky high. What was a thinly veiled secret may soon be another gung-ho military maneuver.

—Beth Maschinot



## Tax season vigilantism

ST. PAUL, MINN.—A two-week trial in federal court ended on January 24 with jurors delivering guilty verdicts on all 19 counts of an indictment charging three rural Minnesota tax protesters with conspiring to assault federal agents and illegal possession of machine-guns and explosives.

The three self-styled Christian patriots—Wilhelm Schmitt, Roger Luther and Ernest Foust—were convicted of conspiring to injure Peter Gandrud, an Internal Revenue Service agent. The three men were arrested in late 1984, and at the time of their arrests U.S. Treasury Department agents seized a large cache of firearms, including machine-guns, dynamite and other bomb components, and literature dealing with violent resistance to tax agents and other federal officials.

In a courtroom loaded with their confiscated weapons and ammunition, the defendants asserted that statutory restrictions on possession of guns were unconstitutional. They stated repeatedly that they were “free, natural sovereign citizens,” immune from the laws they were charged with violating.

We did not come to the government and ask for the privilege of owning machine guns and hand grenades,” Wilhelm Schmitt said in his closing argument. “We are not required to, because God has given us these rights.” The defendants represented themselves, and refused the help of standby counsels appointed by the court.

During the testimony, an undercover Treasury agent testified that Schmitt and he discussed the acquisition of a “mind-nullifying”

device that could damage a person’s brain with some type of radio waves at a distance of 200 feet. The government agent testified that Schmitt wanted the device to use against IRS agents.

The defendants claimed that war with the Soviet Union was imminent, so the stockpile of weapons was needed for their protection.

—Mordecai Specktor

## Who controls state’s rails?

MADISON, WIS.—Spent nuclear fuel that was shipped last month through Wisconsin without that state’s permission has brought to a boil a long simmering controversy concerning federal pre-eminence and states’ rights.

The rail shipment, originating at a utility company 30 miles northwest of Minneapolis passed through western Wisconsin on its way to a storage facility in Illinois only 12 hours after a Wisconsin circuit court judge removed a temporary restraining order barring the shipment because of a procedural technicality.

Wisconsin officials maintain that transporting the radioactive waste violated state statutes. The utility, Northern States Power Company (NSP) of Minneapolis, has argued that it is within its rights because under Nuclear Regulatory Commission rules regarding interstate transportation of reactor wastes, federal regulations overrule state laws.

Northern States’ claim was given added weight in late January when a Dane County Circuit Court judge denied a second temporary restraining order, this time on more substantive grounds. According to Judge P. Charles Jones,

Wisconsin has no jurisdiction over shipments of waste that originate out of state. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) plans to counter the judge’s ruling.

The controversy centers on a DNR administrative rule requiring an emergency plan to control and clean up any accidental spill that might occur. NSP refused to show the department an emergency plan and so obtained a restraining order in early January.

“NSP has publicly stated it will not come forward with a response plan,” observed Cassandra Dixon, a spokesperson for Nuke-Watch, a Madison-based group that has been monitoring the transport. “NSP says there is absolutely no chance of a spill.”

An attorney for the utility, Thomas Zarembo, testified at a public hearing in mid-January that NSP had already undertaken an “overwhelming amount of emergency planning” and had supplied the state with sufficient data on safety.

In a letter written to the utility immediately following the shipment, Sen. Joseph Strohl, chair of the State Radioactive Waste Review Board, called the shipment an intentional violation of state law. He also charged the utility with a “total lack of corporate responsibility.”

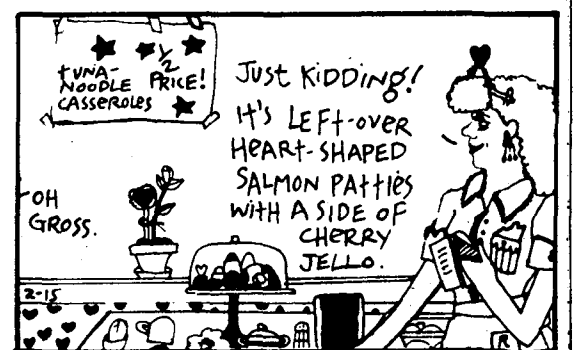
The utility countered, saying the state “blind sided” NSP when it requested the original restraining order. The utility company has said it would continue to counter the DNR’s administrative order, and indicated it would haul further shipments through the state during the appeal process.

Meanwhile, protesters met the first shipment in two Wisconsin communities and are organizing against future shipments.

—Craig Allen Schmidt

## SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander





By Joan Walsh

**I**N THE YEAR SINCE AT&T DIVESTED its regional telephone operating companies, long distance rates have dropped, as predicted, by 6 to 10 percent. The competition that divestiture was supposed to spur is evident, if most notably in television commercials. By 1985's end, AT&T's 400 long distance rivals will have doubled their pre-divestiture market share, leaving the once-monopoly with about 80 percent of all long distance customers.

On the down side, local phone rates across the country rose almost \$5 billion last year, an average of 24 percent, and are continuing to climb. And by the end of this year, consumer groups estimate, as many as two million people could go without phone service because of post-divestiture rate hikes.

That local rates would climb while long distance rates fell was clear before AT&T's breakup. Local charges must be raised dramatically, industry argued, because for years long distance users, primarily businesses, have subsidized local service, paying higher costs to keep residential rates artificially low. Even the most social-minded analysts have accepted that argument, asking only if it's fair. But few have asked whether it's true.

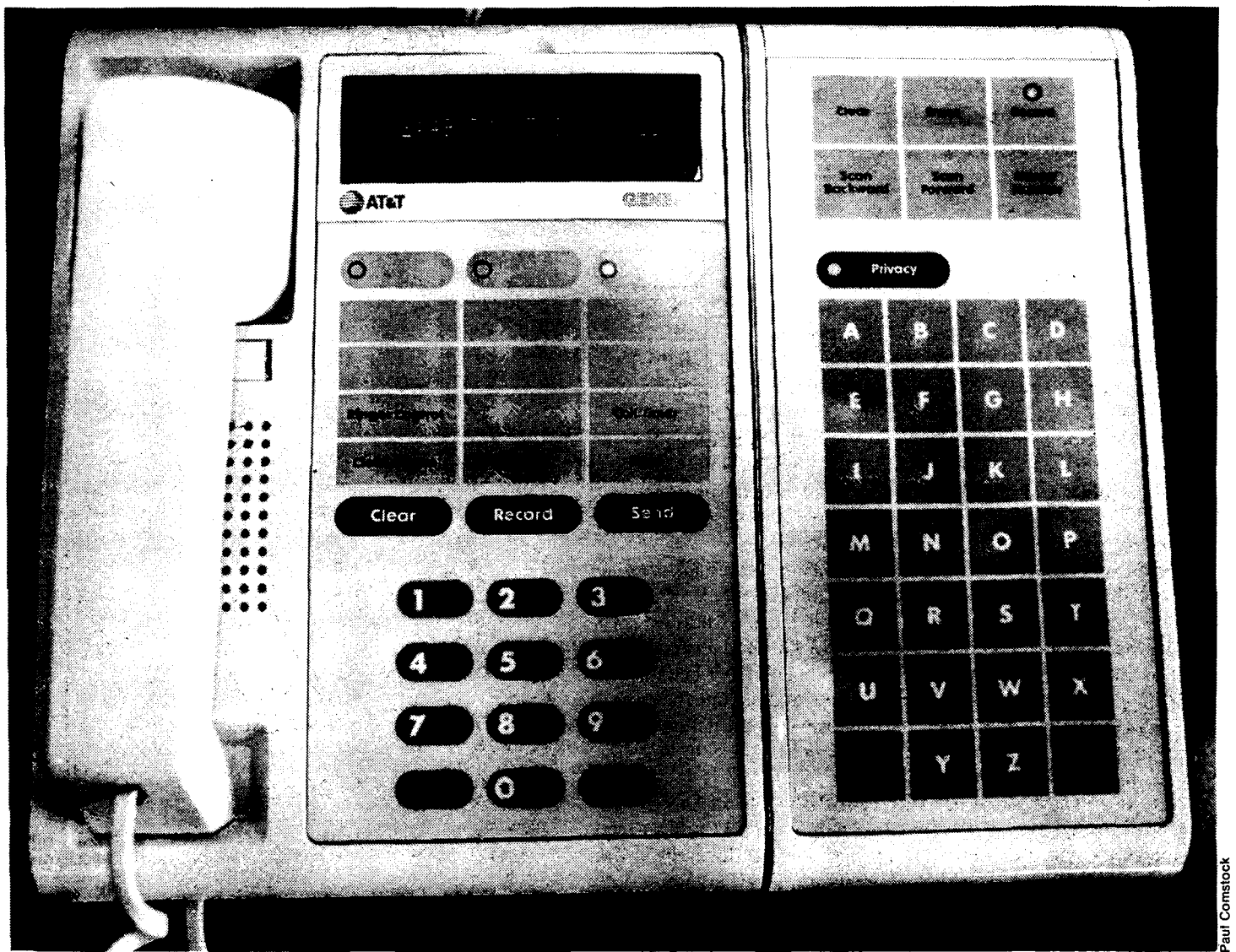
Consumer advocates, at least, are convinced that it isn't. Although most were staunch backers of divestiture, particularly as outlined by its chief legal proponent, New York Federal District Court Judge Harold Greene, it hasn't worked as it was envisioned. "It is not working for residential consumers, and it probably is not working for anyone else it was supposed to benefit," says Sam Simon, president of Telecommunications Research and Action Center.

The steep rise in local service rates is probably the most painful result of the AT&T breakup, and it demonstrates how its purpose—fostering competition and lowering prices—has been confounded. Now, lower prices are evident in competitive phone services, such as long distance calling and equipment. But the industry has shifted the cost of competition to the remaining monopoly service, the local system, where prices have climbed.

The central problem has been untangling the web of services the single entity AT&T once provided, and assessing the costs of each. Under AT&T, local and long distance service grew up together, with advances in long-distance technology often changing the way local service was provided. Some of the innovations that made long distance transmission quicker and more efficient improved local service, yet many were irrelevant. The shift from four-digit phone numbers to seven, for instance, was solely for long-distance calling.

The "subsidy" that industry representatives talk about was the revenue that more expensive toll calls provided to local operating companies—both the company where the call originated, and where it was received. Now AT&T and other long-distance providers pay the local firms access charges—about 25 percent of the cost of the local system—but they no longer "subsidize" it. Thus local rates must rise to make up the difference.

Not content to just raise rates, many regional companies are also restructuring them, trying to establish measured service, which bills for local calls by unit, time and distance, much like long-distance calling. Remote rural areas, which once were subsidized under the principle of providing "universal service," will likely be (and in some places already are) forced to pay dramatically higher rates than urban areas. And the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which has been even less tough on the phone companies than state regulators, has implemented a controversial access charge for residential and single-line business users. The FCC had proposed a \$7 per month fee; under consumer pressure it reduced that to \$1 per month this year, \$2 in 1986. This will allow long-distance access charges to drop, lowering long-distance rates.



There is no doubt that rising local rates are helping subsidize the development of new telecommunications technology.

AT&amp;T

## Consumers bear the cost of the breakup

Consumer advocates argue that under the new rate structures, local service users are paying for a system they don't need. "People are being charged for Cadillac phone service when they just need a Chevy," in the words of Wisconsin Citizens Utilities Board (CUB) chair Kathleen O'Reilly. O'Reilly and others have quarreled with the way long-distance access charges are assessed, arguing that residential users are subsidizing sophisticated technology—fiber optic cables for data transmission, for example—that the average consumer doesn't need.

But this situation is likely to continue. The regional companies' best argument for the development of new service and technology is the same one they use for rate hikes and residential access charges—if the regional firms won't provide good, affordable service, large corporations and the long-distance providers will bypass that network and get it elsewhere. Already AT&T predicts it will be able to provide its large customers with direct long distance service within a few years.

The bypass argument is overstated by industry, but it cannot be dismissed. What is missing from the debate are realistic assessments of who will bypass the public system and whether the private hookups will damage it. "That's a pure mathematical question that no one's really asking," says Gene Kimmelman, legislative director of the Consumer Federation of America.

The same lack of data is evident in de-

bates over long-distance payments to the local system. After the many years when AT&T provided everything, no one is certain how much it costs local systems to furnish long-distance service, and which costs should be borne by whom. So while regional companies are asking for drastic rate hikes to lower costs even further for long-distance clients, consumer groups are opposing virtually any increase, and state regulators are landing somewhere in between—last year's rate hike requests were cut by just over half, but the local firms are coming back for more.

In some cases, the companies' exaggerated rate demands have become obvious. Wisconsin CUB demanded and won a \$10 to \$15 per subscriber rate refund from Wisconsin Bell last year, when it showed that the company's \$88 million rate hike was bringing in windfall profits. In several large states, consumers have prevented the onset of measured service, showing how it would push up the cost of local government and force tax hikes. But generally, regulators and legislators have bought the notion that local rates will have to rise, perhaps drastically. In interviews on the first anniversary of AT&T's breakup last month, Judge Greene urged regulators to be tougher on local firms' rate hike requests in the wake of last year's soaring local bills.

### From monopoly to oligopoly?

The worst fear about divestiture is that, in the end, fierce competition and lower long-distance rates will be temporary. "In 10 years people will say the breakup of AT&T was a sham, because AT&T will still be the overwhelmingly dominant company," Stanford University business historian Robert Hession told the *New York Times*.

AT&T made \$1.4 billion in 1984, just over half of what it had projected. Although some analysts say that's a healthy performance for the first post-divestiture year, AT&T is using the sub-par showing to argue for complete deregulation. The firm is particularly anxious to break down an FCC-imposed separation between its computer and equipment technology division

and its communication services. AT&T argues the split makes it impossible to provide clients with telecommunications packages—telephones and computer systems as well as long-distance service. Its competitors argue that a single entity AT&T could wipe them out of the market.

Meanwhile, the regional firms are looking to the days of local deregulation. But because greater rate-setting freedom will bring with it local competition, they're following AT&T's example and consolidating their dominance in the market first. The emphasis on developing new technology and upgrading the local system is one thrust. But the firms have also requested that Greene and the FCC let them enter new fields, which the divestiture agreement prohibited. The regional firms are trying to expand into computer technology, consulting services, foreign businesses, even real estate.

There is no doubt that rising local rates are helping subsidize telecommunications research and development that will chiefly benefit large corporations. But consumer advocates are at a loss for the best way to address the problem. One line of argument denies that any rate increases are necessary, and that new technological advances are merely "goldplating" the system, providing innovations the average consumer will never need or use.

The CFA's Kimmelman takes a more moderate approach. "I think we have to be flexible, allow some rate increases and not others and try to assess the real costs of the system," he says. "Everybody should pay the cost of the burden they place on the network, and business is going to come out paying more."

But he cautions against dismissing all new services as "fancy gadgets" for business. "A lot of people want new services. The rise of home computers makes people more interested in data transmission. We could go back to a party line and it would be cheaper, but who would want that?"

For now, the most realistic demand that will stop local firms from pricing some people out of phone service is establishing a lifeline rate for low-income phone customers. Although the regional firms would like to see a lifeline rate become a government responsibility—with "phone stamps," a la foodstamps—CFA is pushing to build lifeline into the companies' rate structure, with a once-a-year proof of eligibility resulting in a lower local rate.

"It's the only way to protect the notion of universal service," Kimmelman says. "We can go back and fight for more later, but this is important now."

**Rates are rising because "people are being charged for Cadillac phone service when they need a Chevy."**





# The 99th Congress:

**Editor's note:** Faced with a burgeoning federal deficit, several tax reform proposals, a controversial missile system and strong pressure from the Reagan administration to fund Nicaragua's CONTRAS, the 99th Congress has its work cut out for it. Overviews of these pressing issues appear on these two pages, and each subject will be examined in more detail as the congressional debate unfolds.

## Budget

By David Corn

**F**EBRUARY 4 MARKS THE OFFICIAL kick-off of the 1985 battle of the budget. That's the day President Reagan is to submit his budget for fiscal year 1986 to Congress. Not only will that intensify the trench warfare that has already begun on Capitol Hill, but it will also trigger a budget fight that could well shape American politics for the rest of the decade, if not longer.

This year's battle promises to be bloodier than those of recent years. The more than \$200 billion federal deficit hangs ominously like a dark cloud over the 99th Congress, and deficit reduction has become the clarion call of members of both chambers. Much is riding on this budget—not just the billions of dollars in social programs already earmarked for cuts, but perhaps the political future of both parties and several individual politicians, most notably Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole.

The pre-season was filled with political machinations and confrontations, as the players jockeyed for position. In December the Reagan administration circulated budget documents proposing about \$34 billion in budget cuts. Of these cuts, according to a study prepared by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, about 96 percent came from the 40 percent of the budget (excluding interest payments) consisting of domestic programs other than Social Security, and 18 percent of these cuts hit directly at low-income programs. (These fi-

gures dropped a few points with revisions made by the administration last month.)

With all this slashing the administration's budget still fell short of the magic number of \$50 billion—the amount of deficit reduction that the Office of Management and Budget says is necessary if the administration is to reach its goal of halving the deficit by 1988. The \$50 billion figure has also been adopted by Senate Republicans as their target. Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker has held it out as a carrot; at least that much will have to be cut, he says, before interest rates drop.

The \$50 billion number even crosses ideological lines. Rep. William Gray III, the black liberal Democrat who was elected chair of the House Budget Committee, accepts it as a reasonable target, according to an aide. "But is this mandatory?" asks the Gray aide. "That's questionable."

With the Reagan proposal failing to reach the \$50 billion mark, mostly because it barely nicked the military budget while ruling out revenue increases, the Senate Republican leadership, with Dole at the helm, struck out on its own. Dole announced that Senate Republicans would put together their own budget by February 1 and let it be known they were considering some form of across-the-board freeze, which would include both the military and Social Security.

It hasn't been easy going for Dole. There were some encouraging signs at first. Maybe conservative Republicans would accept a freeze on military spending, which Dole needs in order to press effectively for a freeze on Social Security and freezes and cuts in domestic programs. But in the face of a stubborn Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and a strong Pentagon lobbying drive, Dole has not been able to sway conservative Republicans on a military budget

*Continued on page 8*

## Taxes

By Richard Meyer

**T**AX POLITICS IN THE 99TH CONGRESS will be dominated by the tax reform proposals unveiled by the Treasury Department last November. The Reagan administration will likely push hard for a modified version of the Treasury plan, despite opposition from Senate Republicans, who are reluctant to antagonize the business lobby and divert attention away from cutting the budget deficits, and from House Democrats, who don't want Reagan to get credit for reforming the tax system.

The Treasury plan, as it stands now, is a complete reversal of the crowning legislative achievement of Reagan's first term, the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 (ERTA). The cuts in personal tax rates in 1981, when combined with inflation-induced bracket creep and Social Security tax increases, left most taxpayers with higher federal tax burdens. At the same time, ERTA, through various business tax breaks, virtually repealed the corporate income tax, which supplied about 25 percent of all federal revenues in the '50s and '60s, but less than 10 percent after 1981.

The new Treasury plan would increase corporate tax payments 25 percent by eliminating business tax subsidies such as accelerated depreciation and the investment tax credit. These reforms would have substantial economic impact by lessening tax interference with business and investment decisions, sending less capital into unproductive, tax-oriented investments.

For individuals, the Treasury plan would lower rates to 15, 25 and 35 percent of gross income by eliminating most current deductions and credits, which primarily benefit the top third of taxpayers. It would give approximately 80 percent of all taxpayers a slight tax cut, would institute a simpler process of filing taxes and would remove the poor from the tax rolls almost

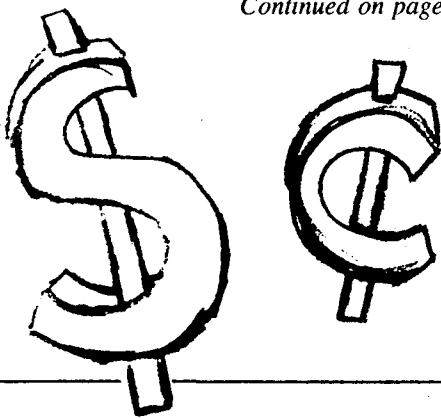
entirely. Overall, this Treasury plan would raise the same amount of revenue as the current system.

Speculation abounds about why Reagan would condone this progressive plan, which contradicts his earlier tax legislation. The most common theory is that tax reform is just a smokescreen to help the president avoid the tax increases many Congress members are calling for.

There is, however, a crisis in the tax system that the administration has been forced to respond to. Illegal tax cheating and legal tax sheltering—by corporations and wealthy individuals—have increased steadily for the past decade. If tax rates were increased under the current system, the likely response would be more cheating, more sheltering, more unproductive investment—and not more revenues. The current body of tax law is so porous that it may well be unable to raise the revenues necessary to cut the budget deficits over the next five years.

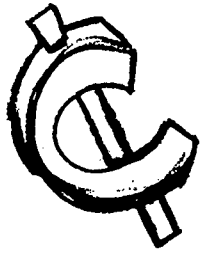
Bi-partisan support for tax reform will come from the two leading alternatives to the Treasury plan: the Fair Tax, sponsored by Democrats Sen. Bill Bradley (D-NJ) and Rep. Richard Gerhardt (D-MO), and the Fair and Simple Tax, sponsored by Republicans Rep. Jack Kemp (R-NY) and Sen. Robert Kasten (R-WI). Since these plans are similar to the Treasury reforms, there appears to be a broad political consensus about how the tax system should be changed. Any reform package that is likely to pass will be a mixture of these plans.

Although most Congress members appear to agree with the principle of tax reform, the politics of getting it passed are a different story. Democrats have been talking about tax reform for a long time without success. Yet Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill is reluctant to let Reagan take the credit for reforming the tax laws. House Ways and Means Committee chair Dan Rostenkowski (D-IL) shares this sentiment,





# What **LIES** ahead?



indicating that it may be inappropriate to discuss tax reform, which would only shift the tax burden, when tax increases are necessary to cut the deficits. But Rostenkowski, like the rest of his party, is unwilling to initiate tax increase legislation at this point. Thus if tax increases are proposed this year, they will probably be loophole closings on the corporate side.

Senate Republicans continue to oppose tax increases. Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-KS) bluntly says that ferocious business lobby opposition makes tax reform unrealistic, and that his top priority is the budget. The other Senate power-broker on taxes, Finance Committee chair Robert Packwood (R-OR), simply says that he likes the tax code as is.

Tax reform will be the subject of extensive congressional hearings in the spring, but the real negotiating won't come until the "dog days" of summer. Since no tax reform plan can avoid offending powerful interest groups, it will need strong presidential support to be approved.

**Richard Meyer** is assistant editor of *Public Citizen's People & Taxes*. His book, *Running for Shelter*, will be published this month.

## MX

By David Corn

**T**HE FIRST MAJOR ARMS CONTROL vote of Ronald Reagan's second term is not looking too good for the president. The MX missile, a cornerstone of his strategic buildup, is slated to face a series of four votes in Congress sometime between mid-March and early April, which could determine the future of the beleaguered weapon. MX opponents need to win only one of these votes to prevent the production of the 21 missiles Reagan requested last year.

These votes promise to provoke a frenzy on Capitol Hill, second only to the stir inspired by the federal budget. Some lobbyists and congressional staffers have suggested that this may well be the final

showdown in Congress on the MX, the large and accurate land-based intercontinental missile that can carry 10 warheads. But, as critical as these votes are, the MX has time and again proved its staying power, and the occurrence of these up-or-down votes, while probable, is not completely guaranteed.

Congress is expected to vote on the production funds for the missiles that Reagan requested in his budget for fiscal year 1985. Last year, after a protracted debate, Congress approved a compromise, and these funds were "fenced." Under this agreement the \$1.5 billion for 21 new MX missiles—Congress had already approved the first batch of 21 missiles in 1983—could not be released until March 1, 1985, and then only after the president asks for the funds to be released. Once he does so, the Senate and the House each have to vote twice in favor of freeing the funds, in order for Reagan to get his missiles. Coming on the heels of the votes on 1985 funds will be a consideration of his request for \$3.7 billion for 48 missiles for fiscal year 1986.

With the changes wrought by the elections—MX opponents apparently picked up a net gain of one seat in the Senate and probably lost a few in the House—and all the new wild cards, such as the arms talks, that have been added to the deck, predictions are difficult. Congressional staffers, lobbyists and pundits all tend to use the word "flux"—as in "great flux"—in describing the situation.

But Jay Hedlund, a lobbyist for Common Cause (which opposes the MX) and a veteran of the past few go-arounds on the MX, says that "the atmospherics have changed to benefit" MX opponents. He points to the increased concern on Capitol Hill with military spending and notes that more moderate and conservative members have begun to question the MX program. "We're seeing members who are usually described as pro-defense conservatives airing substantive criticisms of the MX and saying, for

example, they're concerned about its vulnerability," adds Hedlund.

If there is a bottom line for MX opponents it is that within their grasp is a real opportunity to kill production funds for a strategic weapon already in production—which would be a historic first. The decision on 1985 production money could easily swing on the basis of only one or two votes.

A key vote belongs to Rep. Les Aspin (D-WI). In the past two years, Aspin, who has engineered several compromises to save the MX, has done more to confound MX opponents than anyone else. With his recent promotion to chair of the Armed Services Committee, Aspin is now even more visible, and many members are expected to take their lead from him once again.

As for Aspin's position on the MX in 1985, he has been keeping it to himself. But in a recent speech he hinted that he no longer viewed the MX as an effective bargaining chip. Does that mean a switch is forthcoming from Aspin? No one on the anti-MX side is counting his vote because in the same speech he warned the Congress should not "interfere too heavily" in the arms talks and should not "take away any bargaining leverage."

The administration has already begun to lean heavily on both chambers with a bargaining chip argument in support of the MX. Will it work? Many members won't buy it, predicts a House aide working with anti-MX members. "Will half-a-dozen buy it?" he asks. "That remains the question."

What's working in favor of an anti-MX vote are two prime characteristics of the missile—vulnerability and cost. "It can't be based with any reasonable degree of survival, yet we're pouring up to \$40 billion into it as a bargaining chip," says the Senate aide. He adds, "If you want to reduce \$50 billion in federal spending to cut the deficit, how can you do that and still build MX missiles?"

There is talk on Capitol Hill of compromises and a possible delay in a vote on the 1985 funds. Nevertheless, MX opponents are proceeding at full speed. Most expect

Reagan to ask for the funds and trigger the votes—though he might sit tight. What happens with those votes will heavily influence what happens to Reagan's 1986 request. Some anti-MX lobbyists have referred to the spring vote as *the* vote. But Jay Hedlund warns, "If we knock it out of the box in March, we must make sure to nail the coffin shut and then sit on the lid so that it doesn't again rise from the dead."

*This is a shortened version of an article that appeared in Nuclear Times.*

## Contras

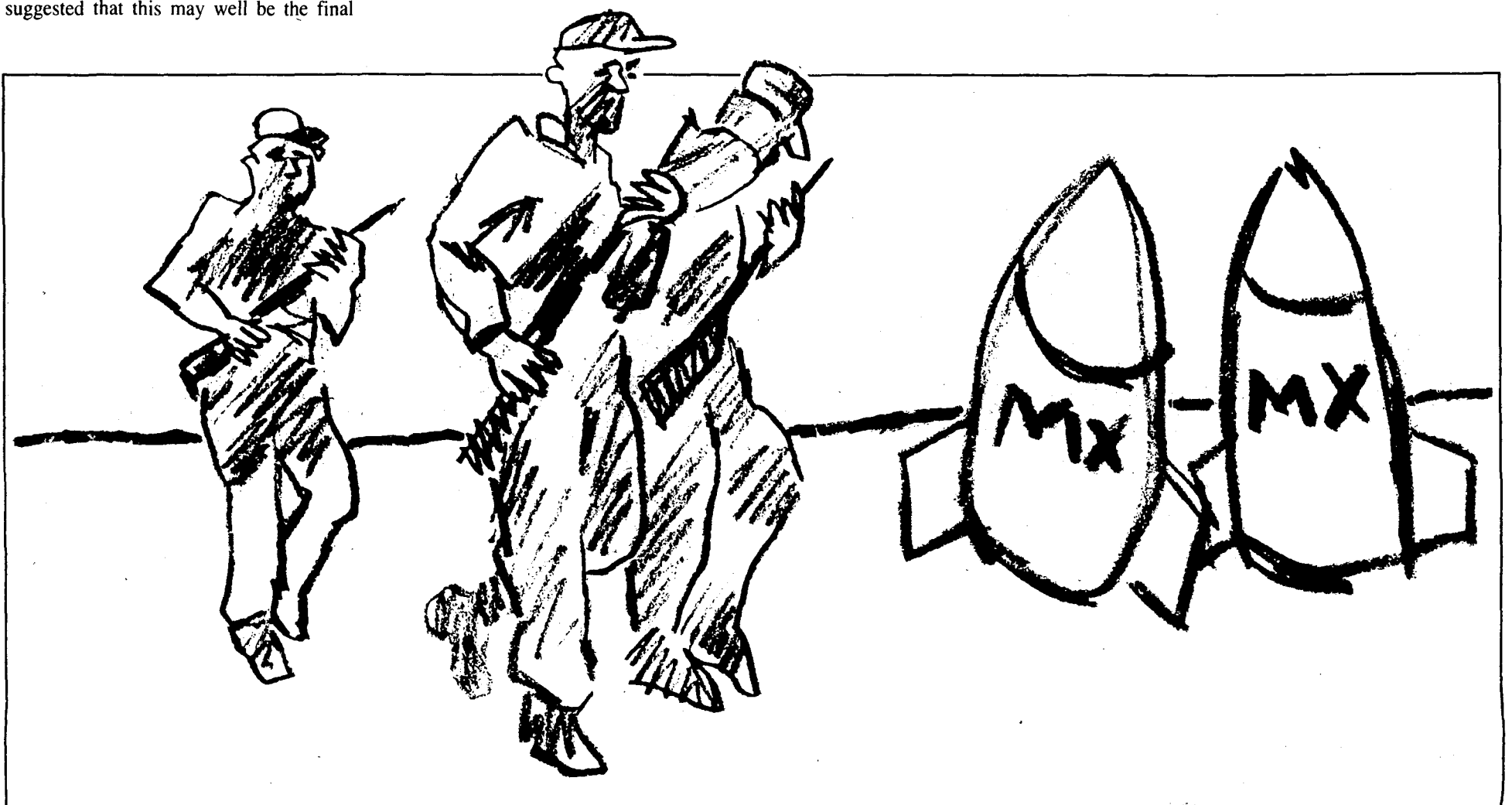
By Joy Hackel

**I**T IS INCREASINGLY UNLIKELY THAT the Reagan administration can garner congressional support for another renewal of covert aid to the counterrevolutionaries or *contras* in Nicaragua. Congress suspended aid to the anti-Sandinista rebels last year, stipulating that the funding could not be spent unless both the House and the Senate renewed approval after February 28.

House leaders remain firm in their opposition to the not-so-covert war, and members of the Republican controlled Senate have signalled recently that there is little hope for covert policy. In late January Sen. Richard Lugar (R-IN), new chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, argued that *contra* aid is not viable because it is no longer "covert." So if the administration opts to push for covert aid, it risks forcing a confrontation with both sides of the congressional aisle.

The more radical option of overt aid is reportedly under serious consideration by the administration. In this case the administration would "go public" with open financing and request aid before both houses' foreign affairs committees. An overt aid program is unlikely to get automatic support from the Senate. Republicans such as

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# Budget

Continued from page 6

freeze. Unable to cut this deal, he now says the Senate Republicans' budget proposal will be released February 19.

Much has been made of the Senate Republicans' independent campaign to draw up a budget, but their proposal and the administration's may not end up too far apart. "There is the impression that Dole is off to chart a different course than the White House," says a lobbyist who is a close observer of the budget process. "That may be true with defense and Social Security. But the documents that Dole has circulated to Republicans has them signing off on about 90 percent of the domestic cuts proposed by Reagan."

In the meantime, the Democrats have been lying in wait. Both Gray and House Speaker Tip O'Neill have said that everything is on the table, but they are giving the Republicans first crack at the budget, while they plot strategy away from the headlines. The Senate Republicans and the White House, according to a number of lobbyists and congressional aides, would like to see a quick agreement reached in the Senate so they can quickly pass the budget over to the Democratic-controlled House, placing the pressure on the Democrats. Whether this happens or not, Gray is expected to hold thorough hearings on the budget, though O'Neill has publicly promised that Democrats are "not going to be obstructionist in any manner."

How different will the Democrats' approach to the budget be? Gray told the *National Journal* last month that he can support an across-the-board freeze on federal spending, with no exceptions for Social Security or any other program. And O'Neill has said that Democrats would consider any proposal regarding Social Security offered by Reagan, but that Democrats won't cut Social Security on their own. An

aide to a Democratic senator notes that a Democratic package might contain a freeze on military spending and entitlement programs and cuts in domestic programs—all elements of Dole's original plan. The difference, he says, will be that the Democratic domestic cuts will be "thoughtful, not a rape" and that there will be some tax reform that would increase revenues.

Putting together a package that approaches the \$50 billion figure is a tough task for all involved. It is generally conceded that a package with a theme—such as freeze—stands a better chance than a piecemeal solutions. But how to pull all the disparate elements together? Dole hasn't been able to do so while working with members of his own party. Every aspect of the budget has its staunch defenders.

So far much of the preliminary sparring on the budget has occurred over military spending. The military budget will remain in center stage. Dole, who was forced to give up on a military spending freeze, still continues to do war with Weinberger, decrying the 6.7 percent real increase the Pentagon is demanding. The Republicans' effort to obtain deep domestic cuts and a limit on Social Security could hinge upon how much is denied the Pentagon.

"The Republicans were inches away from getting everything they wanted," says the Senate staff aide. "All they needed was to have the president say he would freeze military spending—they then could have deep domestic cuts and a freeze on Social Security—and also say once the point was reached when there is too much pain there would be some taxes thrown in. This would reduce the deficit and keep the economy going strong." It could also usher in a "Republican millennium," he adds, building momentum for the Republicans in 1986, when 22 Republican senators face re-election. And in 1988 Dole could run for president on the claim that he bailed out the economy.

If the Republicans remain unable to pull it all together—failing to convince either Reagan or Republican hardliners that a

roughly \$300 billion military budget is high enough—the Democrats might have an opening. But timing is crucial. How long can the Democrats sit back and let it look like the Republicans are doing all the work? Will the Democrats be able to present an alternative that isn't merely a milder version of a Republican initiative?

David Corn is a New York-based freelance journalist who covers politics.

# Contras

Continued from page 7

Lugar have publicly opposed overt assistance, arguing that this would be close to a "declaration of war" and that there is no current consensus for outright military intervention among the American people.

The Reagan administration is also exploring "back door" options to continue the *contra* war, including alternatives such as "humanitarian aid," a funding "wind-down" or other "temporary" measures that would ostensibly be used to relocate the *contras* and their families. Democrats such as Rep. Lee H. Hamilton, (D-IN), new chair of the House Committee on Intelligence, argue that they will fight covert aid, but admit that they are willing to leave the door open to administration proposals for alternatives to the covert aid program. These options could be used to sustain the *contras* while both the anti-Sandinista rebels and the Reagan administration search out new sources of support.

The recent reshuffling of members in congressional committees key to Central America legislation will likely provide additional obstacles for the administration. Sen. David Durenburger (R-MN), the new chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, announced in September his opposition to renewal of covert aid and publicly declared his intention of blocking an administration request for aid. Under his leadership Durenburger claims, the committee will

"choose to play absolutely no role in this [Nicaraguan covert aid], turn it over to the political system and say this is a political issue." Although a critic of the *contras* covert war, Durenburger has reiterated his support for "any effort to undo the Marxist stranglehold [in Nicaragua], but within limits, and those limits are protecting the use of covert action as a national security tool."

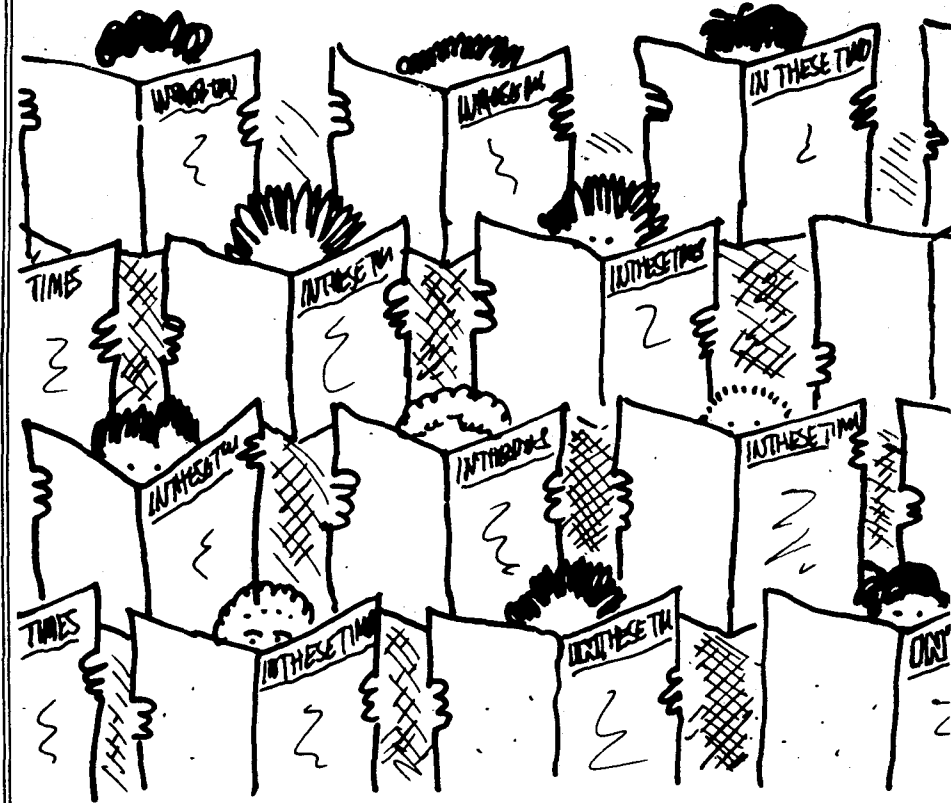
Incoming chair of the House Committee on Intelligence Hamilton is currently investigating reports that the CIA spent more than the ceiling of \$24 million for aid set by Congress for fiscal year 1984. Durenburger and Hamilton, along with the new vice chair of the Senate Committee on Intelligence, Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT), are all expected to be more critical of the administration's Central America policy than their predecessors.

While the Reagan administration is preparing a large-scale battle to win over congressional support for the *contra* cause, the upcoming debate over renewal of funding is unlikely to be a final referendum on the CIA's "covert" war. Despite last October's congressional mandate to suspend U.S. aid to the anti-Sandinista forces, well-supplied rebels continued daily raids, penetrating deeper into Nicaraguan territory. The Nicaraguan Democratic Force, the largest of the *contra* groups, sustained a consistent level of combat without suffering a cash-flow shortage, according to the group's leaders.

In recent months the rebels have been buoyed by at least several million dollars in aid from U.S. corporations, individuals, conservative groups and "friendly" governments such as Israel, Taiwan and Argentina, according to published reports. And the Reagan administration has also admitted that Honduras and El Salvador, both heavily dependent on U.S. military and economic aid, have emerged as key sources of aid to the anti-Sandinista rebels.

Joy Hackel works for Policy Alternatives for the Caribbean and Central America at the Institute for Policy Studies.

# ITT GOES TO COLLEGE



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# Crime

Continued from page 3

have been inordinantly victimized by American racism, they argue, adding that increased federal assistance for ameliorative social programs is the way to stem the rise in crime. But, as Starr points out, crime rises despite large expenditures on various social programs.

Another barrier to a racially focused assault on crime has come from many left-liberal theorists who have often been reluctant to place any special onus on blacks for the problem of crime. Because slavery, Jim Crow laws and institutional racism have so crippled black Americans' development, they reason, certain deficiencies should be tolerated and indulged. Sometimes this sociopathic behavior is even romanticized; the noble ghetto hustler, fighting against racism and injustice the only way he knows how, has fueled many a picaresque imagination.

Meanwhile, an insidious kind of criminality has seeped into the lifestyles and cultural attitudes of many black inner-city youth. Many urban communities have become virtual no-man's-lands with the growing pervasiveness of black-on-black violence. And though many in the black community have long warned of this development, they've received little help from their leadership.

When the Black Panther Party launched its campaign against what it called "illegitimate capitalists" in the late '60s, it received enthusiastic support from the crime-ravaged core of the black community. Established black leadership and many of the same white people now applauding Goetz denounced the Panther's campaign as errant vigilantism. When H. Rap Brown organized a New York-based group dedicated to wiping out the heroin trade, he was set up, arrested and dismissed as a common criminal. When the Nation of Islam sends

its missionaries into the very den of the underclass, compiling a record of rehabilitation successes that would put most reform agencies to shame, they are accused of exploiting misery for their own questionable ends.

But all of these outbursts of indigenous anti-crime activities have been triggered by black leadership's refusal to treat the problem with the concern it warrants and by a sense that official law enforcement is at best unconcerned with positive developments in the black community.

This apparent acquiescence to the crime epidemic by black leadership and the left has also enhanced the appeal of right-wing demagogues, who readily attribute all crime problems either to certain racial characteristics or to sinister wealth distribution schemes. To many crime-weary people, these right-wingers seem to be the only ones unafraid to tell it like it is. Theirs are among the loudest voices praising Goetz's action.

When someone like psychologist Kenneth B. Clark correctly chides Goetz's supporters for ignoring significant problems and advocating simple-minded and possibly dangerous solutions, he is dismissed as one of those irrelevant liberals. Yet his vision probably holds the key to the solution.

"For a variety of reasons," notes Clark, a venerable authority on racial matters, "our society does not ask itself: 'how do so many young people become mindlessly anti-social and, at times, self-destructive?' A painfully disturbing answer to this core question is that 'mugged communities,' 'mugged neighborhoods' and, probably most important, 'mugged schools' spawn urban 'muggers.' Given this fact, a more severe criminal-justice system, more prisons and more citizen shootings will not solve the problem of urban crime."

But while we wait for something that will solve the problem, a fearful population contemplates desperate action. And somebody like Bernard Goetz becomes a hero for shooting some black guys in the back on the subway.



# All aboard for "Star Wars"

By Diana Johnstone

BONN

**T**HE ARMS CONTROL PARADOX has struck again. Merely by including the "star wars" project in the vague agenda of eventual arms control talks with the Soviet Union, the Reagan administration has succeeded in making space an officially recognized arena of the arms race.

As soon as he got back from meeting Andrei Gromyko in Geneva, Secretary of State George Shultz set about using the arms control agenda to blackmail Congress in the familiar way. Progress in the new arms control negotiations, Shultz said, depended on Congress appropriating \$26 billion to research the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). Otherwise, "if the Soviets can get what they want out of us without anything in return, they would love it."

European leaders are reading this to mean that, like it or not, the arms race in space is on. And although appalled by the price tag of the big boondoggle in the sky, Europe is getting ready to clamor aboard for fear of being left behind with the underlings.

A rare protest was voiced by German Green Parliamentarian Roland Vogt who said the January 8 Geneva declaration was a "breakthrough"—not toward disarmament but rather toward a new dimension of armament. "A bizarre project [star wars] that up to now was highly controversial even in the U.S. has thereby, that is, by being linked up to the positive value of disarmament, become respectable."

Vogt added, "It is the Reagan administration's goal to entangle not only its allies but also its chief rival, the Soviet Union, in space armament. In order not to openly violate international treaties (especially the ABM treaty),...the U.S. government is seeking a sort of treaty amendment with the Soviet Union: the anti-ballistic-missile armament in space should be allowed. In return, the Soviet Union can get the illusion of having a say in the tempo and volume of U.S. space armament."

As usual, the U.S. wants to draw its leading NATO allies into the new phase of weaponry so they will help pay for it. A step toward getting the Europeans hooked on space was President Reagan's invitation to take part in the 1992 "Columbus" manned space station project.

This is no free ride. The cost for West Germany, earmarked to lead the European participation, is upward of a billion dollars (three billion marks). Such an expenditure is clearly unpopular at a time when social benefits are being cut back for budgetary reasons. Moreover, the scientific value of the excursion is dubious. The directors of six leading West German research institutes strongly protested research funds being spent for Columbus, noting that the project had little to do with scientific research (which could better be carried out by cheaper, unmanned satellites) and more to do with "strengthening international relations" and with eventual military uses.

Overruling such objections, the Bonn government decided on January 16 to spend a total of 4.5 billion marks to take part in both Columbus and in the French-led European space program, Ariane 5. At the same time, Bonn turned down a French invitation to take part in a mini-space shuttle, "Hermes," just recently proposed by French President François Mitterrand.

## A real partnership.

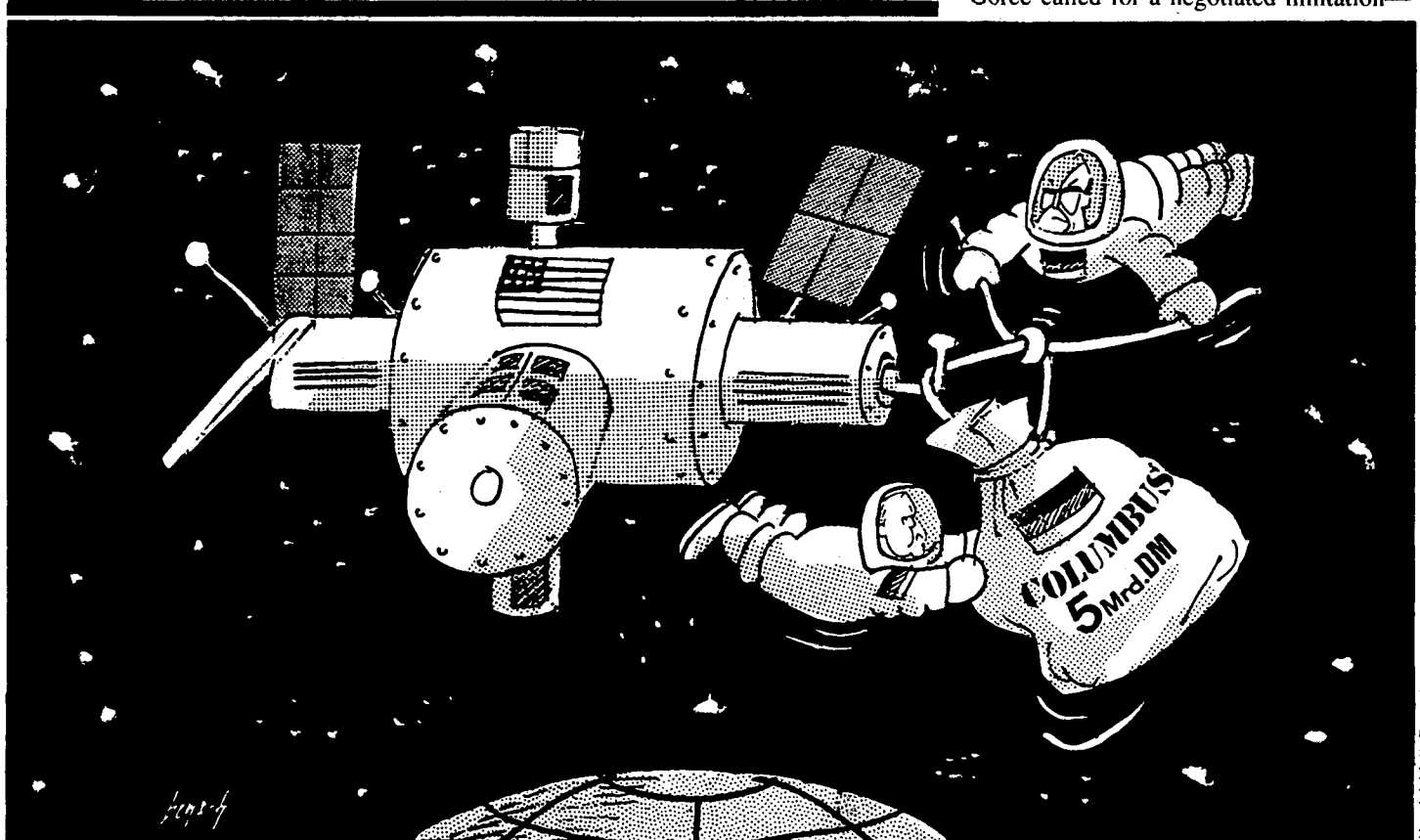
Research and Technology Minister Heinz Riesenhuber was instructed by his government to insist on a "real partnership" with the U.S. Europeans have sour memories of their contribution to Spacelab, appropriated by NASA after a single flight. That was

called "the most expensive European gift to the U.S. since the Statue of Liberty," and Columbus is a lot more expensive than that.

Bonn will also insist on no limitations being put on technology transfer or commercial uses of the mission's findings. The financial and business newspaper *Handelsblatt* called for tough bargaining with

Huntzinger, also pointed to the need to "strengthen Europe's independence, without putting into question the alliance with the U.S."—which sounds like the current NATO formula for more European military spending. It also rejects an "arms race in space," a prospect that genuinely alarms European (and no doubt Russian) leaders because of the ruinous cost.

## IN THE WORLD



## If missiles start flying, the Europeans would like to see who fired first and not rely on the Pentagon's word.

the Americans so as not to get short-changed in partnership. This time, the Germans' bargaining hand is strengthened by a couple of factors, the newspaper noted: the Americans can hardly finance the \$8 billion space station alone, and they know that the Europeans today "are quite capable of carrying out their own space research."

As the European partner with the most money and the strongest technological base, Germany can thus try to play off American bullying and French ambitions against each other. President Mitterrand seems as starry-eyed, in his own way, as President Reagan. But despite Mitterrand's political support to Pershing 2 missile deployment, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl is not rushing to support Mitterrand's dream of a European space station.

In the French eagerness for a European space station, German Social Democratic Party (SPD) leaders have spotted a possible handle on reconciliation with the French Socialist Party (PS) after the Euro-missile quarrel. On January 15, in their first joint policy initiative, the SPD and the PS issued a statement calling for close Franco-German cooperation in arms control, disarmament and defense. The statement, worked out between the two parties' specialists in those fields, Egon Bahr and Jacques

What this statement means is that Bahr is supporting the project of a French observation satellite, in the hope of eventually getting French Socialist Party support for the creation of a nuclear weapons-free zone in Central Europe. This support is unlikely to materialize until the French Socialists are back in the opposition—and no longer taking orders from Mitterrand.

Just as the American militarization of space is justified to the public as purely "defensive"—thanks to Reagan's brilliantly simple-minded image of a "protective shield" miraculously preserving sacred America from a hail of nuclear missiles—so, too, the French space project is justified as defensive, rather more credibly. At present, the European NATO allies are totally dependent on U.S. early warning systems and on what the U.S. tells them it has observed. It would not be polite to say so publicly, but if missiles start flying, the Europeans would like to be able to see for themselves who fired first, and not have to take the Pentagon's word for it. Indeed, they can reason that their ability to see for themselves might in some circumstances have a deterrent effect.

Back in May 1978, France proposed that the United Nations set up an international agency of control satellites to verify arms control agreements. As this suggestion got nowhere, and the UN is weaker than ever, French defense specialists last year began promoting a European observation satellite instead. Politically, this is a very different proposal. A European satellite might be used for independent arms control verification, but it might also be used to further European military and economic power against the weaker parts of the world.

Last November, in a speech in the Bundestag, Petra Kelly of the Greens sharply criticized the SPD for supporting a spy satellite that could deliver data for the precise determination of attack targets as well as it could verify arms control. West Germany "as joint owner of a space guidance

IN THESE TIMES FEB 6 1985 19 instrument for the use of French nuclear weapons" would not be a greater force for peace, she argued.

## France as global power.

Satellite or no satellite, France is unlikely to fire nuclear weapons against such an adversary as the Soviet Union. But such an acquisition, coupled with nuclear weapons, could enhance its cherished role as global power. Even peaceful knowledge gathered in space is power.

Despite Mitterrand's enthusiasm for space technology, France initially opposed the Star Wars project with special vigor. The credibility of the French nuclear deterrent is wholly dependent on the weakness of Soviet anti-ballistic missile defenses as ensured by the 1972 Soviet-American ABM Treaty. The race to build a defensive space shield theoretically means the end of the Treaty, of Soviet vulnerability and of the French nuclear deterrence doctrine.

Thus French Ambassador François de la Gorce called for a negotiated limitation—

but not a total ban—of military uses of space in a speech to the UN Disarmament Conference in Geneva last June 12. France was disturbed at technological developments that would undermine nuclear deterrence, he said. Moreover, he noted, the defensive systems envisaged would be partly automatic and for technical reasons would substitute uncontrollable reactions for political decision.

Those objections assume that the research program would actually produce a functioning defensive system. But de la Gorce voiced another objection that is valid in any case. "The mere announcement of intention to go ahead in devising such systems constitutes in itself an incitement to a new stepping up of the offensive arms race: each power will try to saturate the anti-ballistic systems envisaged by the other side and to multiply non-ballistic vectors (notably cruise missiles)." In other words, the mere prospect, however fantastic, of a defensive shield that lets cruise missiles—and only those missiles—through would be a boon to the cruise lobby.

The weakness of the French opposition to Star Wars is that it is based on defense of a totally artificial doctrine—the deterrent value of the French nuclear force—against another equally artificial doctrine, namely that American space weapons research and development is directed solely to constructing a purely defensive system.

On his way back home from the Shultz-Gromyko meeting in Geneva, Reagan's national security advisor Robert McFarlane stopped in Paris to talk Mitterrand out of his objection to U.S. development of the Strategic Defense Initiative. According to *Le Monde's* hawkish defense correspondent, Michel Tatu, McFarlane was largely successful. The important French contribution to deterrence would "remain essential in the foreseeable future," McFarlane said, adding that offensive weapons would continue to play an essential role. ■



## GUATEMALA

Marcelo Montecino



## Building new image to aid sick economy

By Chris Norton

### GUATEMALA CITY

**I**N LATE DECEMBER GUATEMALA'S ruling general inaugurated Ojo de Agua, the latest in a series of strategic "model villages," as the army calls them, built in the pine-covered mountains of the Ixil Triangle in the past year.

The dignitaries attending the event listened to army speeches about how it was "bringing development to the country's Indians who had been abandoned by past governments." They then followed General Mejia as he made the rounds, turning on water and electricity and snipping ribbons at the doors of the new school and the community center.

The speakers told the sparse audience of Indians—many of whom said they had been ordered to attend—that they had been "deceived by the subversion" in the past, but now they had chosen the army's protection. No speaker said why the army was reconstructing the town, or why it had been destroyed.

But the Indians knew. They told reporters afterward that the army killed between 300 and 800 Indians in the region around San Juan Cotzal after a 1980 guerrilla ambush of an army patrol, during which several officers were killed.

At a party after the ceremony, a reporter asked Gen. Mejia about the Indians' charges. He was uncharacteristically frank, saying, "Killing 300, killing 500 to save the country. Isn't it worth it?"

This is one of the few times the military government acknowledged its responsibility for the widespread massacres that ravaged the highlands or for the "disappearances" of recent years—which have increased again since the August 1983 coup that brought Gen. Mejia to power.

### Image rebuilding.

Clearly, Guatemala's rulers want to change the country's image. As the economic crisis deepens, they hope the image-building will lead to increased international aid, which Guatemala needs desperately. The current debt is \$2.3 billion, and almost \$1 billion of that is short-term loans that will come

due in the next two years. Last June the International Monetary Fund (IMF) suspended the remaining \$60 million of a \$120 million standby loan because Guatemala refused to increase its tax revenue, proportionately one of the lowest in Latin America.

By November capital flight and the lack of dollars had driven the black market rate for dollars up to 1.40 quetzales, and the government responded by setting up a parallel market, a de facto devaluation that ended Guatemala's longstanding parity with the dollar. Yet after the parallel market was installed, capital flight—\$800 million since 1979—surged again, prices on many goods jumped up 25 percent overnight and the black market rate rose even higher, to 1.50 quetzales to the dollar. Local business people now fear the vicious devaluation-inflation cycle that Guatemala's economy, one of the richest and most industrialized in Central America, has long avoided. Private analysts predict that Guatemala will continue its fourth straight year of economic decline in 1985.

Success in its campaign to improve its image is most apparent in foreign affairs, under the adroit handling of Foreign Minister Fernando Andrade. He recently renewed diplomatic relations with Spain, which were severed in 1980 when Guatemalan security forces stormed the Spanish embassy to remove a group of protesters who had taken refuge there, killing 39 people. He has also reopened negotiations on the status of the former British colony, Belize, which Guatemala claims. Diplomatic relations with Great Britain, strained by the Belize question, will be renewed as well.

Although the nationalistic, ultra-right has called for Andrade's resignation because of his willingness to negotiate Guatemala's claims on Belize and to accept Guatemala's culpability in the embassy attack, he is secure. A millionaire lawyer and banker, he is a long-time confidante of many important officers. And the military rulers surely realize the effectiveness of his public relations work.

Elections leading to a civilian government are the centerpiece of the image-rebuilding. The government now talks earnestly about the "process of democratiza-

tion."

Elections for president and Constituent Assembly will be scheduled when the writing of the country's fifth constitution in 40 years is completed. Originally, that process was to take two months, but it has dragged out as the Assembly haggles over specific articles. The latest battle centers on one stipulating the social function of property. Such an article would theoretically pave the way for state expropriation of land not filling a "social function" and possibly lead to agrarian reform—a tender subject for Guatemala's ultra-conservative private sector. But the far right need not worry. "Social function" articles have appeared in past constitutions but have never been enforced, leaving undisturbed one of the most skewed land-tenure systems in Latin America.

### Election contenders.

The principal contenders in the elections, which few people here expect before summer's end, are the three groups that won

## Reagan has leaped at the chance to praise the "process of democratization" and to increase military aid.

most of the votes in last year's Assembly elections—the ultra-right MLN-CAN coalition, the mildly reformist Christian Democrats and the new "centrist" party, the Union of the National Center (UNC).

The ultra-right coalition is led by the MLN (National Liberation Movement), which had its origins in the CIA-orchestrated coup that overthrew the Arbenz government in 1954. Since then it has faithfully represented the interests of the agro export sector.

In the past, the Christian Democrats had built a strong constituency, winning the 1974 elections but having them subsequently stolen by the military's candidate. Since then its base has been decimated. Many Christian Democrats have been killed. Others fled the country or joined the insurgency.

Christian Democratic Party leader Vinicio Cerezo, who has been publicly outspo-

*The army is reconstructing a town it massacred in 1980 as part of its "new image."*

ken against the military, has few friends in uniform—a distinct disadvantage in a country where the military is the real power. Yet the support of one of the country's most successful retailers, Rodolfo Paiz, may attract other business support by convincing them that the party won't be too radical.

The real comer in the last election was the UCN, the personal vehicle of ambitious newspaper publisher Jorge Carpio Nicole, who shamelessly uses his paper to promote himself. He has a non-program of "centrism," which makes him sound moderate while challenging none of Guatemala's powerful vested interests.

Carpio's "centrism" is a cover, like Napoleon Duarte's in El Salvador, for accommodating to the right while appearing to be charting a new course "between the two extremes." After long waffling on the issue of land reform, Carpio recently declared himself opposed.

There are also persistent, but undocumented, rumors that the UCN has received money from the army and the U.S. Clearly, Carpio would serve both their projects—giving a moderate face to the new civilian government but not challenging the real power.

The army would likely accept the victory of any of the three parties as long as they played by the rules. The private sector, through its business chambers, would run the economy and the army would be the power in the countryside and have the final word on major decisions.

Despite the lack of substantive change the upcoming elections and civilian rule appear to represent, the Reagan administration has leaped at the opportunity to praise the "process of democratization" and to increase economic and military aid.

Overt military aid was cut in 1977 when Guatemala refused it because of the Carter administration's "Communist" human rights conditions. Cynically, the Reagan administration reopened a military line of credit in January 1983, claiming an "improvement in human rights." The army massacres that had killed between 10,000 and 20,000 had tapered off by the end of 1982. For fiscal year 1985 the Reagan administration wanted to give Guatemala's military government its first direct military aid—a whopping \$10 million. It was approved by the Senate but lowered to \$300,000 for training purposes in conference. While the amount is relatively small, it opens the door for more aid in the future.

U.S. economic aid has been increased 40 percent to \$157.7 million, and although much of it has indirectly supported the army's sophisticated counterinsurgency strategy. For the first time the U.S. is directly aiding that program, allocating at least \$1 million to build schools, housing and potable water systems in the army's "model villages."

The new U.S. ambassador, Alberto Pietra—a right-wing Cuban-American academic who wrote a book on Guatemala denying the CIA's role in overthrowing Arbenz in 1954 and accusing the left of responsibility for much of the death-squad activity—promotes Guatemala's democratic opening. And he continues to ignore the bodies, many showing signs of torture, that appear on the streets with disturbing regularity.

The rise in killings and disappearances following the August 1983 coup spurred a group of wives and mothers to form a Group of Mutual Aid on June 5. They publicize cases and pressure the government to present their loved ones. Starting with just four members, the group now has more than 300 families who meet weekly and have carried out increasingly militant protests, which have included a march of 1,000 people on October 12 through the capital, special masses in the cathedral and a visit to the Constituent Assembly.

Although they met several times with Gen. Mejia, the group doesn't expect anything to come of the meetings. Said one member, "We know Mejia isn't really interested."



By Jan Pager

GABORONE, BOTSWANA

**W**ITHIN THE NEXT FEW weeks, the African National Congress (ANC), South Africa's main liberation movement, will hold a major conference somewhere in independent Africa to re-examine its political and military strategy in the wake of what is probably the most tumultuous year in recent South African history.

When the conference meets—at a place and time kept secret for security reasons from all but the ANC's top leadership—it will be with the knowledge that support for the ANC among black South Africans has perhaps never been stronger or more visible. Although the organization has been banned inside the country since 1960, and any open show of support can bring a five-year sentence, the ANC enjoys widespread popularity among South Africa's 22 million blacks.

When Nobel Peace Laureate Bishop Desmond Tutu recently told a Soweto crowd that he had met with exiled ANC President Oliver Tambo in Lusaka, the crowd roared with such approval that Tutu could not finish his sentence. Hundreds of people attended the Soweto funeral last month of Jabulani Ngcobo, age 26, who was the first ANC guerrilla openly buried inside the country. ANC songs and slogans are sung and shouted at every rally; the ANC colors (black, green and gold) appear regularly at meetings and demonstrations. Although there are no reliable polls, few South Africans—including Minister of Law and Order Louis le Grange—doubt that even after 20 years in jail, ANC leader Nelson Mandela is still the most popular black leader.

The ANC's support has begun to take on new significance in recent months, with the collapse of the government's much-vaunted "reforms." As white leaders search for ways to control rapidly growing popular and organized resistance to apartheid, more and more eyes are turning to the ANC. Pointing to the overthrow of white rule in what is now Zimbabwe, the pro-government paper *Die Beeld* editorialized in December: "When significant numbers of the country's citizens are not directly represented in the country's political organs, [the government] has a duty to listen to voices from unorthodox sources or else it is in danger of not hearing important messages before it is too late." Although both the government and ANC deny rumors that negotiations have already taken place, Foreign Minister Roelof (Pik) Botha has offered to allow exiled ANC leaders to return if they abandon their "violent objectives."

Almost certainly, white government officials are split between those who lean toward negotiations with the ANC and those who still hope to protect white supremacy through repression and military power. Significantly, however, businessmen have begun to argue that only a negotiated route to majority rule will avoid both a revolution and a thorough restructuring of the country's economy. Tony Bloom, chairman of

## The movement has been split over socialism vs. nationalism.

one of South Africa's top 10 corporations, and the influential Handelsinstituut, an Afrikaans business think-tank, have both urged the government to negotiate with the ANC while it still can do so from a position of strength.

### Issues to be addressed.

In this climate, the upcoming ANC conference—the first major policy meeting since 1969—is likely to shape the rapidly intensifying struggle in South Africa. Focusing on the liberation movement's political and military strategy, the 200-odd delegates to

the conference will discuss questions raised in reports from meetings of ANC activists, both underground inside South Africa and in exile. Discussion papers have been circulating for months within the movement, and responses have been collected from thousands of activists. ANC leaders are not willing to comment openly on the probable outcome of the conference, but their reluctance only underlines the importance of the debate's results.

One major issue discussed will certainly be the relationship between the ANC and legal political organizations inside South Africa, such as the United Democratic

Front and the black trade unions. In particular, the debate is likely to focus on the relationship between the black working class and the struggle for majority rule. The ANC is unlikely to abandon its commitment to a "two-stage" struggle: first, a broad front fighting for an end to white supremacy, and only later to building socialism. While the Freedom Charter, which outlines the ANC's basic principles, calls for the nationalization of monopolies, land reform, and the provision of basic social services for all South Africans, it is open to a wide range of interpretations—allowing it to serve as the basis for a broad coalition fight-

ing for a democratic non-racial South Africa. This coalition—including socialists, Christians and black nationalists—leaves a broad spectrum of views represented in the ANC. Some observers argue that while most black South Africans feel some loyalty to the ANC, the oldest black party in South Africa, it is not always clear they know what they are supporting—a problem that is magnified by the ANC's underground status inside the country.

White officials and businessmen calling for negotiations appear to hope to

*Continued on page 22*

## An economy in decline

Despite the excitement over Sen. Edward Kennedy's visit and the opening of a new tri-racial parliament last month, the main focus of attention in South Africa recently has been the economy's rapid slide into its worst depression since the '30s. And with growing fears of international sanctions and a dropping gold price, South African economic analysts are predicting that things will get much worse.

In early January, government officials met with groups of top businessmen around the country to warn them that the growing U.S. divestiture movement could strike telling blows on the South African economy. While U.S. Ambassador Herman Nickel reassured businessmen that the Reagan administration opposes divestment as a way to end apartheid, the South African foreign ministry was warning them that potential investors were being frightened away—even without the legislation to limit investments currently before Congress. Until now, Pretoria has downplayed the possible economic impact of sanctions. But as the divestment movement grows in American churches, city councils, unions and universities, government officials are beginning to admit they expect serious repercussions.

And the repercussions could not come at a worse time for South Africa. Already, the rate of foreign investment has slowed to a trickle, down to only 1.6 million *rand* last year. At the same time, the country's

foreign trade bill rose by 10.5 million *rand*, reaching a total of 93.7 million *rand*. Meanwhile, the *rand* has fallen to a third of its former position against the U.S. dollar, from \$1.15 to a mere 43¢. Despite government efforts to shore up the sinking currency, most analysts predict it will drop still further, perhaps going as low as 32¢. As the *rand* falls, it becomes harder for South Africa to buy the technology and inputs it needs to keep its industries going.

In the past South Africa's economy has been protected by gold, which speculators have used as a hedge against high oil prices and inflation. But as the dollar has risen, the gold price has dropped—from \$850 an ounce in 1980 to just under \$300 today. Since nearly half the total value of South African exports has come from gold sales, the falling price will further damage its already bleak balance of trade.

Even if gold should pick up again, most South African analysts do not expect the *rand* to follow suit. After decades of tight foreign exchange controls, the South African bank lifted virtually all restrictions last year, and the bank's total reserves of gold and foreign exchange dropped by nearly 6 billion *rand* to 4.4 billion. Although the government has already hinted that controls may be slapped on again, it will almost certainly be too late to stave off what newspapers have already unofficially dubbed "National Austerity Year."

Savage budget cuts have reduced the official deficit from 4,200 million *rand* to 2,800 million *rand*. But with a costly war on in Namibia, with the prospect of further uprisings in black townships, and with already large interest payments to make on international loans, the South African government is unlikely to be able to maneuver its way quickly out of a se-

vere recession.

The effects of that recession are already being felt, as unemployment has begun to soar. Early in January, manufacturers cut 100,000 jobs because of falling consumer spending. Steel and engineering cut 80,000 jobs, while the motor industry cut a total of 50,000 jobs. Official unemployment figures have never been reliable in South Africa, where black unemployment has been chronically underreported, but now even the official predictions of a million jobless by June look grim. In many areas, particularly the bantustans, unemployment has reached at least 20 percent.

If there was any good news at all for South African businessmen last month, it was that the maize crop may not be a total failure after all. The rains may have fallen just in time to prevent a complete loss of the harvest—but even now, only half the normal harvest is likely to be saved.

In the general atmosphere of economic gloom, with a recession that will hurt black workers as well as business, it is striking that so many black leaders continue enthusiastically to support the American divestment movement as a means of pushing the government toward far-reaching change.

While open calls for divestment are rare, since such appeals may be illegal in South Africa, the broad-based United Democratic Front was quite direct in its statement to Kennedy. "The continued investment by Western countries, including and especially the U.S., has not diminished the poverty and suffering among our people. There is in fact good evidence to show that the problems of the poor were accentuated during periods of escalating foreign investment" in South Africa.

-J.P.



Photographer unknown

## SOUTH AFRICA

# Upcoming ANC conference to reconsider political strategy



By Peter Dammann

**I**N THIS BUSINESS, IF YOU'VE GOT all your fingers," says Merle Donnelly, puffing steadily on the pipe he cradles in a hand missing its first finger and most of its second, "they say you don't have enough experience!"

Donnelly laughs. Clad in a khaki shirt, faded green jeans, suspenders and a brown baseball cap with the union initials on its brim, Donnelly, who is 62, has been working in mills on and off ever since he moved to the Pacific Northwest from Nebraska in 1946. "Say what you want," he says, leaning against the pickup truck parked 100 yards up the road from the gates of the Louisiana-Pacific (LP) Corporation's Round Prairie stud mill, "working in a lumber mill is about the hardest, most dangerous work a man could do around here."

At this particular mill, nestled in the hills of Central Oregon beside the Umpqua River, Donnelly put in 15 years as a planerman under three different owners. "A damn good mill, the best job I ever had," he says, "until LP got it."

Propped against a nearby telephone pole, a faded picket sign proclaims: "LP Unfair!"

A year and a half ago, Donnelly and his 55 co-workers, represented by Lumber Production and Industrial Workers (LPIW) Local 2949, struck the Round Prairie plant. They joined some 1,650 other union workers at 17 other Louisiana-Pacific mills on the West Coast in what has become the longest, most bitter strike in the history of the Northwest timber industry—a strike rocked by bombings, gun-fire and sporadic brawling between strikers and strike-breakers at the gates of many of the mills.

Louisiana-Pacific, the nation's second largest lumber products firm, has emerged from the labor dispute as one of the great union-busting companies of recent times. The firm's alleged refusal to bargain in good faith and its other efforts to break the union last year prompted the AFL-CIO to add LP to its "corporate dishonor role." The LPIW's parent union, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, meanwhile launched a national consumer boycott of LP products, the first boycott in the union's 100-year history.

The man most responsible for LP's actions has been the company's 59-year-old chairman and president, Harry Merlo, a hard-driving executive whose \$2.4 million in salary, bonuses and benefits in 1983 made him the nation's 19th highest paid executive. His "Southern strategy"—his efforts to impose upon Northwest millworkers the choice of a lower standard of living or the continual loss of forest-products jobs to the Southeast—stems from his long-held antipathy toward organized labor. ("Unions," he wrote recently, "provide security for the lowest common denominator....")

Merlo's decision early in 1983 to break with the rest of the timber industry in contract negotiations and to demand rollbacks in wages and benefits was, in retrospect, a calculated gamble. With unemployment still soaring in communities dependent on the sluggish timber industry, LP had little trouble filling its struck plants with new workers. In some communities, hundreds crossed picket lines to apply for what were the only decent job openings in months. Within three months, LP had opened 15 of its struck plants with a new work force.

The political atmosphere for an assault on the union couldn't have been better. Louisiana-Pacific's considerable influence within the Reagan administration (which became clear when the company's corporate counsel, John Crowell, was named to head the U.S. Forest Service) apparently went a long way in a hearing before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Had it not been for some last-minute, unprecedented and highly suspect maneuvering by the NLRB, the company would now be defending itself against a federal unfair labor practices charge. Instead, LP has been given the green light to proceed with

decertification elections pending at most of its struck plants.

"Merlo was out to break the union," Donnelly says. "And he picked the best time in the world to try it."

#### "Yes we can" philosophy.

In Portland, 180 miles north of the Round Prairie plant, LP's impressive new corporate headquarters, which cost an estimated \$4 million to furnish and decorate, is perched in the top two floors of the tallest building in the state. Despite its looming corporate presence here, the company is

locally known less for its timber operations, which lie scattered in small towns across the country, than as the former owner of the Portland Timbers soccer team and as the sponsor of the Davis Cup tennis matches.

But on Wall Street, LP has been known since its inception as perhaps the most controversial company in the forest products industry, a reputation that is largely a reflection of President Merlo's style.

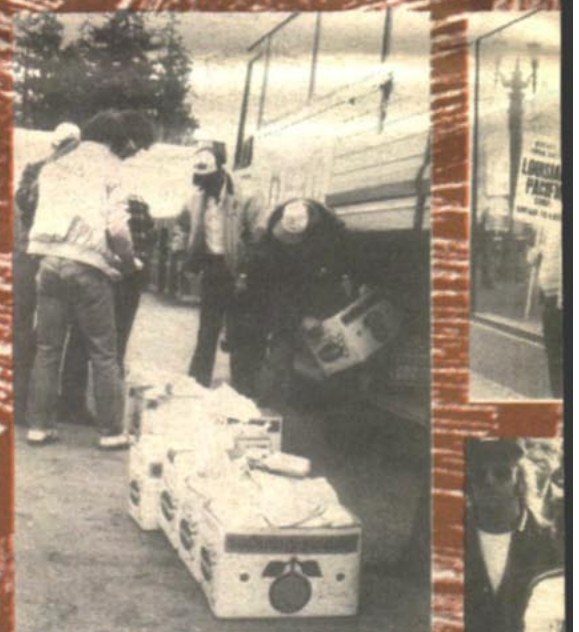
The son of Italian immigrants who settled in a small California lumber town, Merlo moved up rapidly in the industry. He began

as a shipping foreman for a small mill, became a partner and then, when Georgia-Pacific bought out the firm, moved up quickly through that company's ranks. In 1973, when the Federal Trade Commission threatened to break up Georgia-Pacific, the company split off 20 percent of its assets to start Louisiana-Pacific.

Under Merlo's lean and aggressive management, LP grew rapidly into the nation's second largest lumber products company with some 13,000 employees and 110 plants nationwide, and sales of more than \$1 billion a year. Named the timber indus-

# Anatomy of a STRIKE

The battle at Louisiana-Pacific mills is one of the longest and most bitter in the history of the Northwest timber industry.



PLEASE BUY LOU PAC WOOD WE HAVE WITH LUMBER

Photographer unknown



**Photos: Lumber Production and Industrial Workers' Local 2949 is weekly picketing some 220 stores nationwide to encourage customers not to purchase Louisiana-Pacific's Waferwood and other wood products.**

to take on the lumber unions.

Early that February, Merlo proposed to his industry's bargaining group, the Western Wood Products Association, that it hit the lumber unions with demands for major concessions in the forthcoming negotiations when the contracts expired in June. The other "Big Seven" lumber firms—Crown Zellerbach, Boise Cascade, Champion International, Weyerhaeuser, Simpson Timber, Georgia Pacific and Publishers Paper—shunned Merlo's rollback proposal, so the LP chairman broke with the industry group to go it alone.

When negotiations began that summer with the Western Council of the Lumber Production and Industrial Workers and the International Woodworkers (which represented LP workers in a mill in Alaska and one in Oregon), "competitiveness with the South" was Merlo's battle cry. The company's Western mills, he said, faced severe competition from Southern mills, where labor costs were about half the \$9.50 to \$13.50 an hour that union workers made in the West. Pensions, medical insurance and vacations were far more expensive in the West as well.

"Unless we take steps now to keep our Western sawmills competitive," Merlo explained later, "those mills will face further erosion of their share of the lumber market. And there's no question that the ultimate result will be a loss of jobs."

There was also no question of this being yet another financially troubled corporation threatening bankruptcy in order to extract concessions from its workers. The timber company was "extremely healthy," argues LPIW research director Brad Witt. Although it had posted a loss of \$1.8 million for 1982, that followed profits of \$83 million and \$60 million for the previous two years. The company's health was also evident on Wall Street where its common stock was hitting its high-water mark. (That it had plenty of cash on hand became even clearer last year, when the company spent \$1.5 million on tennis tournament sponsorships, \$6 million on its corporate flight department and \$10 million on high-tech risk investment, notes Witt.)

When the rest of the forest products industry signed a contract providing the unions a modest 8.5 percent wage increase spread over three years, LP held out for more, demanding a one-year contract, termination of the union health plan, a \$2-an-hour wage reduction for newly hired employees, mandatory overtime and tougher eligibility standards for vacation and holidays.

It wasn't only the specifics that outraged the union negotiators. LP had insisted that wages and fringes be negotiated mill by mill, refusing to reach a company-wide labor agreement as it had in the past. This forced the two Portland-based unions to travel to remote lumber mills in Alaska, Montana, California, Idaho, Oregon and Washington to bargain with a corporation headquartered only blocks away. The logistics proved far less taxing for LP, which boasts one of the nation's most impressive corporate flight departments.

The negotiations quickly stalemated, the unions insisting that LP sign the contract approved by the rest of the timber industry. On June 24, 1983, negotiators for both unions declared the negotiations "fruitless." Seventeen hundred workers at 18 LP mills walked out.

### Stand off.

Tensions mounted quickly in the small mill towns as LP filled its struck plants with new workers and union workers willing to cross the strike's picket lines. In Oroville, Calif., a van carrying non-union workers in the plant careened into rock-hurling picketers, injuring several striking workers. Shootings were reported in California and Alaska, a firebombing of a plant manager's car in Oregon. Slashed tires and broken windshields were common at many of the struck plants. When an elec-

trical panel at LP's mill in Moyie Springs, Idaho, was destroyed by a dynamite blast, LP posted a \$50,000 reward for information leading to the conviction of anyone "involved in acts of terrorism against the company or its non-striking employees." Union officials speculated that the bombing had been the work of an agent provocateur.

Three months into the strike the union attempted to break the impasse, offering the company some unprecedented concessions. Breaking a 30-year history of multi-year contracts, the unions agreed to accept a one-year contract with a wage freeze and agreed to a company-sponsored health plan.

LP responded to this offer with new demands of its own: it said the unions would additionally have to relinquish their right to honor picket lines at other facilities and eliminate the dues checkoff system and union security for newly hired workers—in other words, agree to an open shop.

On Oct. 23, 1983, the LPIW's Western Council filed a complaint of unfair labor practices with the National Labor Relations Board, alleging that the company's entire course of bargaining "reflects a desire to avoid an agreement and ultimately break the union."

"As the union moved substantially closer to an agreement," the complaint continued, "LP...made certain that no agreement would be reached...by choosing issues they knew were so unpalatable to the union that rejection was absolutely certain."

In April of 1984 NLRB General Counsel William Lubbers concluded that the company's conduct, including its insistence on mill-by-mill negotiations, "evidenced an intention to frustrate the bargaining process and avoid reaching agreement with the union." Of LP's demand for new concessions when the union attempted to break the impasse, Lubbers said, "The employer must have realized that these proposals stood little likelihood of acceptance" and "could only be viewed as a further effort to avoid reaching agreement at a time the union appeared ready to make concessions." Lubbers directed the board to issue an unfair labor practices complaint against the company, alleging that the strike was "an unfair labor practices strike from its inception."

On the picket lines, word of the ruling spread fast. "We hadn't had much to cheer about until that point," says Donnelly. "It was looking like we might finally win this thing."

Had the union prevailed in court, none of the striking workers could have been permanently replaced by the company. No strikebreakers would have had rights to vote in any of the decertification elections then pending at many of the plants. The company could have been held liable for millions of dollars in back pay to the striking workers.

But the union never got its day in court. Three days after he issued the order, Lubbers' term expired, and President Reagan appointed Wilfred Johansen to temporarily fill the vacancy. Before Johansen officially took office, his staff, in an unprecedented maneuver, overturned Lubbers' decision against LP. It was, the union asserts, the first time a decision made at the highest level of the NLRB had been reversed without court action.

The union's attorney protested vehemently, and Johansen rescinded his staff's action, reopening the case for "further consideration." But after a perfunctory review of the case, in which LP's attorneys did not even appear for final oral arguments, Johansen cleared the company of any wrongdoing.

"It was a political quick fix," asserts LPIW negotiator Mike Draper. The union asserts that Johansen paid visits to the White House the day before and after the final determination on the NLRB charges against LP.

Johansen's decision cleared the way for decertification elections pending at nine of the struck facilities. Late in June, the company claimed a landslide, winning by solid margins at each plant. Missing from those tallies, however, are the votes of dozens of striking workers whose right to vote in the

election was challenged by the company.

"LP challenged our votes wholesale, using all kinds of bogus claims in order to deliberately skew the results," says Draper. Six months later, with the NLRB still sorting through the challenges, the election results remain unofficial.

### LP nirvana.

Five months into the strike, LP communications director Gerald Griffin candidly described for a Portland television reporter his company's idea of Nirvana: "Our view is that if we could have the perfect world, we would go back to the work ethics of the '20s and '30s, when that European 'a full day's work for a full day's pay' was not only the right but the privilege of individuals, and get everybody thinking about individual performance again, rather than this mass collective protectionism."

Just what this "perfect world" might mean for the company's workers is already evident in LP's own Southern operations. In the company's mill in Eufala, Ala., whose 125 employees voted in the carpenter's union last spring) the wages topped out at \$5.10 an hour. Many workers, most of whom are black, were making only the legal minimum of \$3.35 an hour.

The company's labor practices in the South became a subject of contention at LP's shareholders meeting in Rocky Mount, N.C., last May, where the Rev. Joseph Lowry, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and spokesman for a coalition of civil rights, senior citizen and labor groups protesting LP's labor practices, told Merlo, "We are not going to stand by and let you bring poverty-level wages to the South."

Merlo retorted, "We pay competitive wages wherever we are. We have nothing to do with the poverty level."

Out on the Western picket lines, it's been a long, hard haul, and the NLRB decision was perhaps the toughest blow of all. "The guys are pretty bitter about it," says Merle Donnelly.

For Donnelly, the strike has meant an early retirement, shaving three years of possible contributions from his pension. "I'll get by," he says. "It's been a lot harder on the guys with young kids. This strike has caused a lot of tension and some tough problems."

The picket line has thinned at the Round Prairie plant, as it has at the other struck mills. Of the 56 who originally went out at Round Prairie, four have crossed the lines and gone back to work (the company says that, overall, nearly a third of the striking workers have returned). Many others, unable to support their families on \$100-a-week union strike pay and donated food, have taken temporary work elsewhere, hoping they'll get their jobs back if the strike is settled.

The LPIW's parent union, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, promises its war with LP will continue "as long as there is still one man out on the picket line." The union is weekly picketing some 220 stores nationwide to encourage customers not to purchase LP's Waferwood and other wood products, and recently launched a "don't patronize" program aimed at encouraging consumers to avoid stores that sell LP's products. The union's "corporate campaign" against the company has included a proxy solicitation of LP shareholders, challenges of the company's expansion plans and legislative action against the company.

Portlanders, largely insulated from LP's distant labor wars, got a closer glimpse of the action this fall when 200 striking workers and sympathizers picketed the company-sponsored Davis Cup tennis matches at the city's Memorial Coliseum. The \$750,000 LP spent on the tournament, says Carpenters Union President Patrick Campbell, "could have been used to pay its employees a living wage and avoid what has become one of the uglier labor-management fights of the decade."

The union claims it would have cost the company only slightly more than \$750,000 to have accepted the union's final offer before it called the strike.

**Peter Drammann writes for Willamette Week based in Portland, Ore.**



try's executive of the year by the *Wall Street Transcript* for two of the past four years, Merlo's "yes we can" philosophy, emblazoning LP's stationery and annual reports, has nonetheless taken the company into some murky legal waters: a conviction for restraint of trade in its Alaska operations; a \$5.3 million settlement against it for alleged stock fraud; a \$4 million fine by the Federal Trade Commission (the FTC's largest fine ever) for failing to divest a subsidiary. But few moves Merlo has made with his company have proven so controversial as his decision in the winter of 1983



## EDITORIAL



George Will sees the homeless mentally ill as "human debris."

If ABC's *Nightline* can be used as a political arbiter, the mentally ill homeless have finally found a place on the national agenda, but they're far from finding help. Ted Koppel's January 23 show assembled ABC's in-house Hobbesian George Will, *New Republic* editor and asylum advocate Charles Krauthammer and DSA Chair Michael Harrington (in the role of author and poverty expert), to discuss the growing number of people living on city streets who would have lived in state mental hospitals

before deinstitutionalization all but emptied such facilities (see *In These Times*, Jan. 23). The ideological array only showed the paucity of thinking on this issue.

Will started out well, outlining the history of deinstitutionalization and correctly pointing out its central flaw: that when the mentally ill were released into communities, the dollars for their care didn't follow them. But to Koppel's persistent "So now what?", Will was unabashedly brutish—the mentally ill homeless became

## There's no safety net for mentally ill poor

human litter in his framework: if we have public nuisance ordinances that prohibit littering city streets, certainly communities have every right to clear human debris. Cart them off and out of sight.

Krauthammer merely recapitulated the argument he made in his *Washington Post* op-ed piece last month. "For the Homeless: Asylum." Restrictive involuntary commitment laws and unrealistic ideas about community care are in his view, allowing the mentally ill to "die with their rights on." Krauthammer showed a glib disregard for the statistics on the mentally ill homeless, wildly inflating the percentage of the homeless incapacitated by mental problems. Harrington proved a welcome counter to that line, pointing to the rising numbers of unemployed workers, single mothers and families in the shelters and, like a good socialist, using the opportunity to talk about structural economic problems. But he missed an opportunity to illuminate the issue at hand.

If the growing number of homeless workers, women and children in the U.S. are victims of Reagan's economic program, the mentally ill homeless are casualties of a pre-Reagan experiment in laissez faire medicine. The push to deinstitutionalize the mentally ill and provide community care for those who didn't need fulltime supervision was a valid, essential reform. But its implementation became a rationale to privatize mental health care: as the states emptied their mental hospitals, the federal government created a network of community mental health programs that relied increasingly on the private, non-profit sector. Deinstitutionalization became a de facto assertion that the government should, as far as feasible, get out of the business of mental health.

Anyone familiar with the widespread stories of overcrowding, neglect and abuse suffered by state mental hospital patients will not find it hard to understand why there was little public or professional opposition to this trend; in fact, the psychiatric community both encouraged and welcomed it.

joined the administration's efforts. A day after Reagan's warning, he trotted out last year's favorite theme. "The world is starting to understand," Bush said, "that the Sandanistas have betrayed their own revolution, and that those called the *contras* are the true champions of freedom and democracy." But the world doesn't seem to be listening to Bush's solicitous defense of Sandinista ideals. Just the day before, Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez of Spain expressed puzzlement at the American decision to break off negotiations with Nicaragua.

The action came, he said, "at a moment of clear efforts of flexibility on Nicaragua's part." Gonzalez had earlier sided with the U.S. in accusing Nicaragua of rights abuses and showed his disapproval by meeting with *contra* leaders in December and by sending a low-level delegation to the inauguration of Daniel Ortega Saavedra as president of Nicaragua. Gonzalez made his remarks after meeting with Mexico's president, Miguel de la Madrid, to discuss Central American problems. Praising Ortega's inauguration speech, Gonzalez said it was a "reaffirmation of the original plans with which I feel closely identified."

In Congress, too, there appears to be strong opposition to further aid to the *contras*, despite continuing administration pressure. Even after Rep. Gerry E. Studds (D-Mass.) told Langhorne A. Motley, the assistant secretary of state for Inter-American Affairs, that "whether you like it or

But in the current crisis of mental health care—for the homeless and others—professionals are beginning to look back to government for assistance. The question is, in what capacity: funder, overseer or provider?

There is room for all three. State hospital abuses around the country tarnished the notion of government-provided care; it must be rehabilitated. The trend toward contracting out state and federal responsibilities is continuing even as the need for continuing mental hospital care is being recognized—in Illinois, for instance, the state Department of Mental Health is starting to contract with private operators to develop "specialized living centers" for patients in two state hospitals it is currently trying to close. Already the state sends more patients for treatment at private psychiatric hospitals than it treats in its own facilities.

There is no question that the private non-profit sector will continue to play a large role in this country's mental health system. But the current network is uneven, with compassionate, innovative programs the exception. Private nursing homes have become the new warehouses, where states and families are housing the mentally ill they consider "untreatable."

Federally funded Community Mental Health Centers have failed to provide even a minimal safety net—they've come to function as local mental health clinics, treating people with relatively minor disorders but doing little to help the most chronic, disturbed individuals. Nothing in the loose patchwork of mental health programs fits the bottom line definition of home for those who don't have one: the place where, when you go there, they have to take you in.

As the debate over homelessness and the mentally ill widens, it points out what happens when government abdicates long-held responsibilities. And it's an area where the right has no answers, for its approach has been tried. Comparing humans to litter is going to get embarrassing, even for George Will.

not," the administration's aid request is "politically dead," Motley said he was "not prepared to accept that we can't work these things out."

Motley meant that if covert aid was not a political possibility perhaps there was a less obvious, and therefore politically acceptable way to continue arming the *contras*. Rep. Peter H. Kostmayer (D-Pa.), suspecting that the administration may already have found such a way, warned Motley that use of back channels to avoid congressional intent was a violation of the law. But House Members were suspicious. As Rep. Michael D. Barnes (D-Md.) observed, the rebels are "getting it from somewhere. They're not raising money from bake sales."

For now, there appears to be a standoff. Even the new Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Richard C. Lugar admits that continued covert financing is not viable, and that open financing, which was "tantamount to a declaration of war" on Nicaragua was something the American people do not support. (see story page 7)

But we can be sure that Reagan will keep pushing and looking for an opening to prevent the Sandinistas from stabilizing their government, no matter what the rest of the world may think. And knowing the general spinelessness of Congress members, there is a danger that he may succeed if there is slackening of popular pressure against intervention.

## The rock is rubbing against a soft place

With the resumption of "covert" aid to the forces seeking to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua seemingly hopeless, administration officials are hanging tough. Amid signs of disarray within the administration, and an erosion of support in Honduras, the main base of *contra* support since 1981—when the CIA began to fund and train Nicaraguan exiles on the Honduran border with Nicaragua—the White House is pulling out all the stops.

Domestic and world opinion is moving against the administration, but President Reagan continues to find excuses for his policy of subverting the Nicaraguan revolution. His latest is a warning of a "new danger" in Central America from the boogie men of the MidEast—"Colonel Qaddafi's Libya, the P.L.O. and, most recently, the Ayatollah Khomeini." this new attempt to encircle the United States by the fanatical forces of evil took the form of a visit by Prime Minister Mir Hussein Mousavi of Iran to Nicaragua two weeks ago, a visit the State Department viewed as an effort

to demonstrate Third World solidarity that had no particular significance for the U.S.

At the same time, just in case no one takes the Iranian threat seriously, Reagan reiterated his charge that Nicaragua was using "armed subversion" against its neighbors. Support for the rebel "freedom fighters," he said, was simply an act of self-defense "consistent with the United Nations Charter and the Organization of American States Charter provisions for individual and collective security." But if that were so, one wonders why the administration has withdrawn from a suit brought before the World Court by Nicaragua. Taslim Elias, presiding judge of the International Court of Justice in the Hague, for one, was not impressed. He announced January 24 that the Court would ignore the American withdrawal from the Nicaraguan suit and would continue hearing Managua's complaints of covert United States support for anti-government rebels, a suit everyone expects to go in Nicaragua's favor.

Vice-President George Bush has also



## INSPIRED

KUDOS FOR JOHN JUDIS' "SOCIALISM...what is it?" (ITT, Jan. 23). I have been a Democratic Socialist of America student organizer for two years and I have been distressed of late with precisely the lack of debate and need for creative ideas within the American left that Judis so aptly discusses in his article. How do we become a viable force on the American political scene until we begin to approach socialist politics and economics more creatively and with a greater emphasis on finding solutions to the problems we face?

I read Alec Nove's *Feasible Socialism* last year and found it incredibly refreshing and thought-provoking, especially his reflections on the questionable Marxian legacy in view of the complexity of contemporary economies. Nove seems inspired by a profound concern to make socialism "feasible," democratic and workable within our modern context.

It seems that there is a strong tendency toward what I'll term "intellect-sclerosis" in socialist circles. This is even more pronounced in university settings, where within a four-year span young socialists choose to repeat and often defend the errors of those who came before them, many remaining stuck in archaic ideological ruts and few moving on to form their own ideas.

—Vania Del Borgo  
Oberlin, Ohio

## ET TU, MUWAKKIL/ SLEEPER

THE COMMENTS OF SALIM MUWAKKIL and Jim Sleeper (ITT, Jan. 16) in separate pieces on the state of the American black liberation movement had a familiar ring. I consulted *Why We Can't Wait* (1963) and *Where Do We Go from Here?* (1967) by Martin Luther King Jr.

King referred to the events of his time as the beginning of "America's third revolution." He viewed as unrealistic the promise of fundamental change through a government beholden to an economic power structure legitimated by an ideology of white supremacy. Liberation of the underclass would be realized in the economic restructuring of American society, and the movement to achieve this was seen as tied to the de-colonialization and revolutionary movements in the Third World. He considered the strategy and tactics of nonviolence, and the gains of the Civil Rights Movement, as part of a long march.

By the time of his assassination, King felt that the programmatic demands had been fairly well formulated, and he was emphasizing redistribution that, ideologically, confronted white racism. The Poor People's March on Washington was a call to shut down the federal government through massive civil disobedience, until the demand was met for a guaranteed income. The demand specified that it be pegged to the median income of society and inflation.

(1) The paths of economic power are so limited for blacks that the role of black capitalism in de-colonializing the ghetto economy could not be ignored. Automation and the growth of the service sector would disproportionately affect blacks, and at the same time make blacks indispensable to a viable labor movement. The mass boycott (Operation Breadbasket) was a means to achieve some reform and redistribution. And the ultimate path to economic restructuring was to be gained in a process to "organize our strength...so that the government cannot elude our demands."

(2) Political power has to have as its base the underclass heretofore frozen in despair, he looked to the Jewish "tradition of education combined with social and political action" as a model of community organizing. Sophisticated and selective alliances were seen as essential

extensions of black empowerment with those who share the agenda of change. The black politician, independent of white patrons and empowered by a united black community was seen as "indispensable for an authentic expression of power." Finally, massive civil disobedience was to be used to force a crisis and change.

The efficacy of this focus on power can be seen in the discussion by Muwakkil, Sleeper and others who have commented recently on the movement's vitality, the Jackson campaign, and so on. Political realities also validate the focus on empowerment over program formulation. These realities include the community organizing of the black underclass by the Muslims, the longevity and accomplishments of organizations such as the Urban League, NAACP, SCLC, Operation PUSH, Southern Poverty Law Center and others, as well as the election of black politicians and the national candidacy of Jesse Jackson. These are all manifestations of an expansion of the means to exercise power, even as the means to achieve economic justice have been temporarily blocked. Empowerment, in all of its many facets, will overcome the structures of oppression.

—Victor D. Bloomberg  
San Diego

## HEMP FRAUD

Salutations and accolades. I want to share a quote from the *National Review*, April 29, 1983.

*The [enormous corrupt narcotics police bureaucracy] have lied to us about the effects of marijuana for 50 years and now fund [propaganda fanatics] for "scientific" support...the anti-marijuana propaganda campaign is a cancerous tissue of lies undermining law enforcement, aggravating the drug problem, depriving the sick of needed help, and suckering in well-intentioned conservatives and countless frightened parents.*

The hemp prohibition fraud is detailed in "The Forbidden Fruit and the Tree of Knowledge: An Inquiry into the Legal History of American Marijuana Prohibition" in the *Virginia Law Review* 1973, Vol. 56, #6, p. 971+.

This special interest fraud goes to the heart of a prejudice society. Hemp prohibition is an obvious weak spot in their paradigm supported by many "big lies." Also, USDA says hemp for fiber and pulp alone would make it our most valuable crop. But it would compete directly with the petrochemical and paper industries (4.5 times more paper from hemp than softwood).

Hemp has been a holy food-fiber-medicinal plant for millennia. No scientific review committee/commission report has ever found evidence that makes hemp a fraction as dangerous and addicting as nicotine, alcohol, or many other

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# LETTERS

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unprohibited substances. Please address this waste, injustice and potential fascist boot in the door. Special interests are crying for more military involvement in drug law enforcement.

—Cullen Stuart  
Lincoln, Maine

## CHEEVER

I THINK THERE IS A FITTING POSTSCRIPT to the review "Another Side of John Cheever" (ITT, Jan. 16).

Less than two months before his death, he recorded in his journal: "What I am going to write is the last of what I have to say. I will say that literature is the only consciousness we possess and that its role as consciousness must inform us of our ability to comprehend the hideous danger of nuclear power. Literature has been the salvation of the damned, literature has inspired and guided lovers, routed despair and can perhaps in this case save the world."

—Lillian Lipson  
Coronado, Calif.

## CONTEMPT

I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THE ILLEGAL contempt toward Arabs and the implied racism in George Goldberg's letter (ITT, Jan. 9). There are several Arab-American organizations that support "feminist values"—e.g., ADC, AAUG (Arab-American University Graduates) and NAJBA. More important in our society, American women of Arab background have been active in the women's movement from its earliest days. This includes my mother, who came to this country in 1912 from Syria and worked diligently in the women's Suffragette movement for the right to vote and for other rights.

It also may surprise Goldberg to learn that women are active throughout the Middle East—from Morocco to Pakistan—yes, even in the Gulf, working for women's rights. Despite the horrors of the Israeli-inflicted war, *Al-Raida*

(published at Beirut University College) continued to produce information on the feminist struggle throughout the Middle East. In addition, it provides information on the results of studies about women's problems conducted by Arab women Ph.D.s and about meetings of women representatives from Middle East countries held to discuss issues of concern.

After all, it was the Arab world that initiated—and later preserved—modern civilization and gave it to the West. It is long past time that the U.S.' myopic view of the Arab world, its peoples and descendants be corrected with realistic lenses.

—Mae Stephen  
Palo Alto, Calif.

## TERRIFIC, BUT TONE IT DOWN

I HAVE SAMPLED THE ALTERNATIVE Press for almost 40 years, looking for some sign of the American left finding common cause against the common enemy. Your editorial, "Coming to terms with Soviet society" (ITT, Jan. 9), looks like a breakthrough.

It should be reprinted as a tearsheet and broadly distributed. I would edit the parts about the Soviet Union that use the buzzwords: empire, invasion and paranoia. Conceptual understanding of such words will reveal them to be more provocative than informative when writing about the USSR. And comments about their "stiflingly undemocratic society" are misleading. Every society "stifles" those who are perceived to be disruptive. Just bear in mind that the enemy is still powerful and unrelenting.

Your last three paragraphs are an extremely insightful summation. They provide the non-Communist left with channels for productive introspection. Some day soon, I hope we will all have the courage and integrity to discard this disclaimer: "I'm not a Communist, but...."

—Rea D. Ward  
Englewood, Fla.

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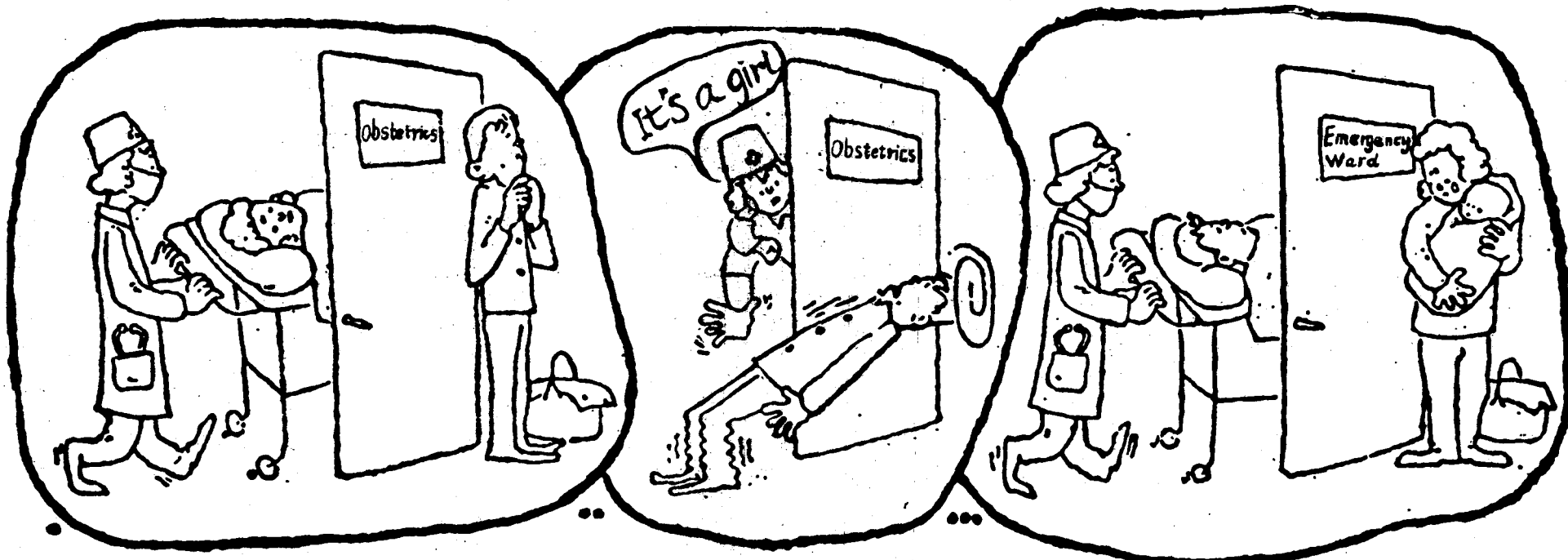
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## PERSPECTIVES



## China's women are hobbled by feudal ideas, new priorities

By Marcia Yudkin

**R**EMEMBER THE INSPIRATION the American women's movement took from Chairman Mao's China—"Women hold up half the sky" and all that? Here comes the bad news: in Deng Xiaoping's China, female infanticide has returned, women in high places are suggesting that women become full-time mothers and quotas ensure that women remain a minority in foreign language institutes.

Having returned from a year living, working and traveling in China, I have to report that Chinese women are not becoming increasingly liberated. Instead their progress toward equality is as hobbled by feudal ideas as 20 years ago, consciousness about women's problems is low and new priorities may be forcing women several steps backward.

The most horrific of these signs that women are in trouble in China is that female infanticide and abuse of women for bearing baby girls, which had become rare, are on the increase. Chinese authorities are outraged by the problem, as one might hope. They condemn the practice, punish perpetrators and try to alleviate some of the pressures that drive families to this kind of traditional desperate behavior.

In attempting to explain this phenomenon to a foreign audience, the government-sponsored magazine *Women of China* last May observed that the deeply engrained Chinese habit of welcoming a boy's birth and bemoaning the arrival of a baby girl had not vanished during the post-Liberation years, when improved living standards and the rising status of women encouraged families to keep their baby girls alive. Throughout that time, many families with girls continued to have children until they produced at least one boy, who would sustain the family line. But with the enactment of China's strict one-child family in the early 1980s, some women whose one baby was a girl, and their daughters, became the targets of persecution by husbands and in-laws.

In accordance with traditional ideas,

Women of China went on, a man and his family would hold the woman responsible for the child's sex and abuse her, kill (or drive her to kill) the child so she could try again for a boy. Or the husband would press for a divorce and with a new wife have another chance for a son. The magazine also pointed out some practical factors behind the persecution. Where heavy farmwork is still the norm, peasants fear that a girl would not contribute enough to the family's subsistence and that when she married she would, like most Chinese brides, become part of her husband's household. Since responsibility for the aged generally falls to sons, they fear, too, that when they become too old to work no one will take care of them.

In response, the government publicizes heavy penalties for anyone caught harming baby girls or their mothers and has stepped up its propaganda attack on the idea that boys are better than girls. On virtually all the billboards that depict happy, loving parents with one child, the child is a girl. To counter the worries of peasants that a girl child means a lonely, poor old age for them, the government points to the localities that have started comfortable old age homes or in other ways assure that all childless or sonless old couples are looked after and implies that with the country's increasing prosperity, such communities will become the norm.

Those measures may indeed ensure the safety and survival of mothers of baby girls and female infants. But other facts show that the government's response can be characterized as an attempt to suppress one terrible symptom without acknowledging or attacking the disease. The disease is the old Chinese patriarchal system, which the Communists have still not thoroughly exposed and denounced, let alone dismantled.

### Underlying cause.

The most powerful remaining linchpin of the timeworn Chinese patriarchal system is patrilocality, or the idea that at marriage women join the husband's household. In some rural areas this results in a high male/female ratio in primary schools, which in turn contributes to rising female illiteracy rates. Evidently many peasants still reckon

that since a daughter will leave their family when she marries, her time and energy while she lives with her parents are better spent in household chores than in education.

In many cities like Beijing with a severe housing shortage, patrilocality survives in the practice of assigning housing to a married couple through the husband's work unit, not the wife's. If the wife happens to have the better job, the potential benefit for the family is lost. Another consequence of the housing assignment system is that often men live close to their jobs while women must add a long commute to their daily burden of chores.

Patrilocality also reinforces the idea that women "marry up," which in turn reserves the jobs at the bottom of society for women. In Tianjin, for example, I asked why all the street sweepers there and in the other cities I had visited were women. "Because the men in those units are drivers. They know how to drive," came the answer. "But women can learn to drive," I protested. Then I was told, "No, really it's because

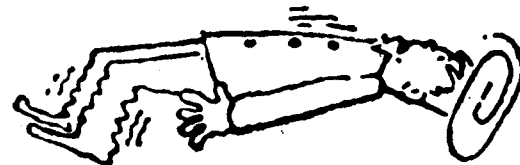
*This Chinese cartoon, reprinted from JIEFANG RIBAO, is part of the government's attempts to protect women.*

government's family planning program.

Shen Guoxiang, educational head of the State Family Planning Commission, once noted that in mountainous areas and coastal fishing areas "Young couples may have a second child, providing the first is a girl. They urgently need a strong labor force in those areas." But if the basic unit of production was the brigade, which was the Maoist ideal, the community, not each family, would need a certain component of strong bodies. Simultaneously, in the cities communal dining rooms and kindergartens, emphasized during the Maoist years, are receiving lower priority. The trend is for households—wives and mothers, that is—to get back the burden of feeding their members and finding caretakers for their offspring.

Perhaps the most revealing evidence of the persistence of patriarchy in today's China is the fact that officials never speak

*The government is punishing anyone caught harming baby girls or their mothers, and has stepped up its propaganda attack on the idea that boys are better than girls. But the push for rapid development and the traditional patrilocality both work to the detriment of Chinese women.*



women street sweepers can find husbands, but a male street sweeper wouldn't be able to find a wife." Since men are still usually considered the head of the household, it would be improper for a husband to have a lower social status than his wife.

Recent changes in policy have actually strengthened another remnant of the old Chinese patriarchal system. The "responsibility system" that has been vaunted for raising rural incomes in the last five years embraces the family as the basic unit of production once more, rather than the community. I never saw or heard an acknowledgement that along with the one-child policy, the responsibility system was a factor in increasing the pressure on women to have a son, but that seemed to me to be behind some significant concessions of the

of protecting women's rights; the phrase always used is "safeguarding the legitimate rights of women and children" even when children are not involved in the particular issue at hand.

Women and children, of course, were lumped together at the bottom of the traditional Chinese power hierarchy, under husbands and fathers. The constant drumming of the phrase "women and children" reflects and reinforces the idea that women are the weaker sex and require protection and that children are naturally the charges of women. One of the strangest instances of this that I encountered was a large headline and photo in the *China Daily* that announced the inauguration of a special bus route for mothers with children. It seemed to me I had seen about as many men strug-



gling with small children on crowded buses as women, but either they were invisible to the Chinese bus company or thought to be too sissy or henpecked to be worth special consideration.

### Back to the house.

Given these indications of the strength of patriarchal thinking in China, it shouldn't come as a surprise that in June 1984 a woman trade union official named Xing Hua put forward a proposal for a three-year leave for all new mothers at 75 percent pay to allow them to take care of their children at home and provide more jobs for unemployed young people. Since the '50s, working women have been entitled to only a 56-day maternity leave or, since the late '70s, six months if they pledge to have only one child. Bian Shaowen, a Beijing labor insurance expert, immediately challenged the plan's practicability but added that in his personal opinion "women could make more contributions by taking good care of their households, especially when they have little babies."

This was not the first plan to send women back to the home to be voiced in recent years in China. In 1981, when unemployment was particularly severe, debate erupted over a suggestion to replace women workers who had families with unemployed unmarried women. At that time the All-China Women's Federation was quick to retort that the solution to the job problem was to expand production, not to cut mothers from the labor force. The women's organization also took the occasion to publicize the problem of discrimination against women in job assignments: many enterprises preferred to take on new male workers so they would avoid the disruption of maternity leaves, although this was against government regulations.

In 1984, however, the All-China Women's Federation would say no more to Xing Hua's proposal than that it was "investigating the issue." Chinese sociologist Chen Jian told me that with the new freedom of state enterprises from direct government control to be implemented soon, enterprises might be at liberty to satisfy their hunger for male workers with no special needs.

In some realms discrimination against women is fairly openly and unthinkingly justified by feudal ideas. When someone I know challenged the practice of the Beijing Institute of Foreign Languages of requiring much higher scores on admission exams for women than men so that women will comprise less than 40 percent of the school, she was given this explanation: "It's not so convenient for women to be translators for diplomats...."

Anyone traveling in any Chinese train can easily confirm that an overwhelming majority of the people traveling on business and dealing with strangers are men. If women were given such responsibilities, who would take care of the child and the family's household chores? During my year in China, I couldn't get one educated Chinese man under 35 to agree that housework was not necessarily women's responsibility. To me this indicated that there could not have been much pressure from government propagandists on this point.

Most of all, with the new emphasis on getting rich through one's own efforts, I fear that the blame will fall on women, instead of on male prejudice and social arrangements that ignore women's need for liberation, when women fail to distinguish themselves in comparison with men. Note this passage from the Chinese-language edition of *Women of China* under the headline "New Outlook Seen for China's Women": "Women are not born inferior; any weaknesses they have result from their upbringing and the infiltration of the traditional culture. Women are not impeded by difficulties and setbacks but by psychological barriers."

It is hard to see how Chinese women can sprint on ahead in the new race for productivity and personal wealth when they are told that the obstacles set out for them by their society exist only in their minds. ■

By Bob Gottlieb & Peter Wiley

A

S RONALD REAGAN BEGINS his second term, he finds that his long time nemesis—environmentalism—is at the peak of its public acceptance. Yet at this moment of growing environmental awareness, environmental organizations, several of whom are seeking new, corporate-style management, are in danger of becoming victims of their apparent success. As membership rolls grow and contributions pour in at a record pace, environmentalism has lost much of its dynamism as a broad-based political force.

The 1984 elections were an important case in point. Poll after poll showed that large majorities—upward of 70 and 80 percent—took a pro-environment position and even placed environmental protection ahead of its economic costs. Yet during the campaign, environmentalism and specific environmental issues were relegated by both candidates to the pale of interest group politics.

Reagan's strength in the election was precisely his ability to attract voters who disagreed with him on specific issues. Environmental issues were prominent in this category. Reagan used optimistic imagery to appear above interest group politics. In reality, his administration has been the very embodiment of special interest politics. And this was no more apparent than with environmental issues where, for example, chemical companies played a direct role in formulating at EPA the regulations for their own industry.

Walter Mondale, on the other hand, was perceived to be the creature of the interest groups, including a number of environmental organizations, such as the Sierra Club, which endorsed him. The genius—or weakness, depending on your perspective—of the Democratic Party has been its ability to feed off important social movements, such as environmentalism, while robbing them of their strength by relegating them to the status of interest groups. And the social movements that have hitched themselves to the Democratic Party, particularly the labor movement, have found themselves on the defensive as a result.

The environmental movement has experienced a roughly similar, though less disastrous, loss of dynamism. When the environmental movement appeared to leap center stage from out of nowhere after Earth Day in 1970, its newer and more youthful

## The environmental movement has lost steam with Reagan. Can it revive?

groups projected both a global vision and a critique of the practices and structure of modern, consumer-oriented capitalism.

In the West, environmentalists played a major role in sweeping into office a number of "new age" Democrats, such as Sen. Gary Hart and Gov. Richard Lamm in Colorado and Jerry Brown in California. They also played a major role in elections in other Western states, such as Oregon, Washington and Montana, and even in conservative strongholds such as Idaho and Wyoming.

Environmentalism was, as Lamm put it, "a force to be reckoned with." But these same electoral victories served to strengthen those environmentalists who were most concerned with the mechanics of government regulation and interest group politics.

Environmentalism is a complex and multi-faceted social movement that has several different historical roots. Its origins are associated with wilderness protection and resource management, but in the '60s it began to take on a broader quality of life aspect. The nuclear age, petrochemicalization of society and rapid urbanization brought to the fore questions of air and water quality, environmental health

## PERSPECTIVES

# Can the ecoactivists take on envirocrats?

hazards, contaminated food products and so forth. Anger and discontent over this deterioration combined with an alternative vision (solarizing America) and specific alternative approaches (e.g. integrated pest management in farming) to shape the new environmental movement.

During the '70s, that movement developed distinct approaches to issues. Ecoactivists were more concerned with grass-roots organizing, protests and visionary possibilities. Envirocrats moved instead toward the centers of power and helped shape and monitor the new ecobureaucracy formed in the wake of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

### The rise of envirocrats.

The envirocrats quickly became the visible, "official" expression of environmentalism. They dominated the major environmental organizations, many of which were staff-based lobbying or legal organizations with offices in Washington. They reduced their global vision and muted their critique of corporate industrialism in favor of a more narrowly-defined focus on the intricacies of political infighting.

During the '70s, their heyday, the envirocrats played a central role in the development of the state and federal regulatory apparatus and were soon able to secure numerous favorable court decisions that shook up entrenched bureaucracies and put numerous polluters on the defensive. Dur-

ing the Carter years, a handful of environmentalists got a glimpse of the corridors of power as they joined the federal and state and local governments throughout the country. Some had a modest impact on legislation and regulation. Others became adept at compromise and traditional interest group politics. And still others went to work for corporations that wanted to reduce environmental opposition.

Meanwhile, the ecoactivists dispersed into a range of single-issue protest movements concerned with such questions as nuclear power, toxic wastes and acid rain. Some of the protests were large and the anger remained strong as new eco-disasters, such as the Times Beach, Mo., dioxin contamination, emerged. But over time, the ecoactivists were unable to link protests to create a more unified and dynamic movement.

Sentiment and reality, however, remain on the side of the environmentalists. Each week seems to bring an environmental crisis of epic proportions, such as the toxic dumping in the Central Valley of California. Environmentalism is one of the few forms of activism that has weathered the up and down cycles of other social movements. And the potential still exists for a renewed and explosive type of ecoactivism which could be a key component of the politics of the 1980s and 1990s. ■

Bob Gottlieb and Peter Wiley write a regular column on Western affairs.

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**New York Panorama**  
By Federal Writers' Project  
Pantheon Books, 526 pp., \$9.95

**The New York Red Pages: A Radical Tourist Guide**  
By Toby and Gene Glickman  
Praeger, 176 pp., \$9.95

By Mike Wallace

In introducing a reprint of *New York Panorama*, the 1938 companion book to the WPA *Guide to New York City*, Alfred Kazin refers to it as "an often-amusing period piece." The 26 essays are diverting. Betty Boop, Jimmy Durante, Walter Winchell, Charlie McCarthy, dancers at the Savoy, horse-drawn milk wagons, crowded Hudson River docks are the stuff of nostalgia. But Kazin sells the book short. These 50-year-old pieces—which explore, among other things, New York's architecture, popular music, radio, ethnic groups, maritime affairs, city planning, social welfare, housing, labor, politics and its (then) upcoming World's Fair—range from competent to brilliant, and remain astonishingly pertinent.

The book's freshness stems, in part, from the decision by the anonymous authors of the Federal Writers' Project to treat their subjects historically. Each article sets 1930s New York in an historic context reaching back centuries. The labor chapter begins in the 1830s with shipyard workers hanging the Mechanics' Bell, a "900-pound throat of bronze" they rang at the end of each 10-hour day to protest their dawn-to-dusk workload. It proceeds, with admirable economy and vivid prose, to sketch a mini-history of the development of capitalist labor relations—an account to which a host of recent studies by left historians have added embarrassingly little.

The essay on popular music has a similar sweep. It seeks the roots of contemporary musical forms in 19th-century minstrel shows, honky-tonks, ginmills, music halls and army regiments. It tracks the transformation wrought by the 20th-century publishing and recording industries (including a knowing treatment of Tin Pan Alley) and concludes with a precis of jazz history and a tour of the "hot" band sites of the city. Because the pieces have an historical perspective they retain vitality. Many are still the best short introductions to their topics.

The book also wears well because of its sophisticated left perspective. The essays, while sensitive to questions of class and power, avoid glibly reductive formulations, and examine interactions between society and culture in a manner that seems distinctively contemporary. They analyze how cultural production—in

sports, theater, film, radio—is shaped by and in turn reshapes the producers' world.

An exemplary essay on New York language traces the sources of that "ever-bubbling linguistic amalgam" in the city's social relations—its cosmopolitanism. At the same time it emphasizes the production of language in the everyday activities of waiters, cabbies, musicians, busboys, doctors, lawyers, nurses, thieves and radio entertainers.

A final explanation for the book's staying power is the authors' political commitment to overcome a ruthlessly utilitarian development process, "savage in its commercial excesses, ravenous in land use,...brutal in its disregard for health, amenities, the elementary kindness of life." By the '20s, these attitudes had congealed into a neurotic self-image that glorified accumulation and "action": "the psychology of swift growth—its quick sense of the expedient, its prompt resource, its urgent energy, its prodigality in human waste, its impatience with deeper interrelationships and effects, by-products or details—was carried over and intensified in a period which demanded consolidation, an essay of cultural attitudes and values, planning, a new concept of the city."

It is here—in retrospect—that the book verges on the naive. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) writers were convinced that a "confident and practical vision of the city as a whole" might help New York "divert the terrific flume of her energy into the orderly dynamos of social realization." At the time this seemed not improbable. Local left politics were thriving. Various New Deal initiatives (like the Federal Writers Project itself) were still in place. The recent passage of the 1937 Public Housing Act led one author to suggest that "a century of protest has at last resulted in an awakened and intelligent approach to the problem."

The times seemed to warrant enthusiasm and optimism. But the New Deal's energy was about spent; it would soon be engulfed in war and reaction. The Writers'

*The Works Progress Administration essays from the 1930s dig deep beneath the surface of the present in order to understand it; the Red Pages settle for a species of left antiquarianism.*



The vaulted main room of New York's Grand Central station in the 1930s.

## GUIDEBOOKS

# Being guided through New York City's history

Project would be one of the first casualties of the renaissance right. But the writers' conviction that New York had a public interest transcending the desires of its real estate developers, and that citizens could and should take charge of the "World of Tomorrow," retains the power to be inspiring in the Age of Reagan.

### New York Red Pages.

Toby and Gene Glickman's *The New York Red Pages: A Radical Tourist Guide* also seeks to inspire, not by explaining the city in a left historical perspective but by recalling the history of the New York left. The Glickmans promise that while standard guidebooks send tourists "to the holy relics of Important People" they will point out "the battlefields and hangouts of the oppressed and the rebellious." This they do, in step-by-step tours through the financial district, the lower east side, the Civic Center and the East and West Villages.

The Glickmans are indefatigable guides. They take us to sites of past and present rebel headquarters—*Freedom's Journal*, an underground railroad stop, the First

International, Socialist Labor Party, *Jewish Daily Forward*, PM, Met Council. We visit the homesites of John Reed and Emma Goldman. We stop at the Liberal Club where Margaret Sanger and Alexander Berkman lectured, and Webster Hall where the *Masses* staff held annual fundraising costume balls and later the Peoples Artists held hootenannies. Our guides point out old and new radical murals, bas relief heads of Ferdinand Lassae and Karl Liebnicht, statues of revolutionary leaders. They recall old and recent popular struggles: an 1837 flour riot, the 1872 general strike, the funeral of Meyer London (first East Coast socialist congressman), a rent strike in 1907, an unemployed rally in 1936, the gay upheaval at Stonewall Inn, the 1970 Vietnam demonstrations. We stop to honor those who sheltered blacks in draft riots; to commemorate families displaced by urban renewal projects; to exorcise the Astors as pioneer slumlords.

When the tour is finished, what are we left with, apart from tired feet? Have we been emotionally nourished by our pilgrimage to sites of struggles past? For me the

result was quite the opposite: the book made the left seem just another artifact of a dead (if entertaining) past.

Partly this is because the writing is musty and clichéd. Workers' efforts are "crowned with success," bosses "cave in" and so-and-so is an "unsung people's hero and martyr." The air is heavy with moral perspiration. Readers—particularly the unconvinced—might well bridle at relentlessly one-dimensional agitprop language. We are told that on the underground railroad the "last stop was freedom." Nonsense. The last stop was the same racist society denounced on an earlier page for burning blacks on street corners.

The crux of the problem is that the book substitutes rhetoric for analysis. At the Woolworth Building, there is a silly bit of doggerel instead of any reflection on New York's role in the capitalist organization of mass consumption; at the Morgan Bank, glib pieties about "financial emperors" rather than discussion of the past or present role of banks; at Merrill Lynch, easy puffery about how a recent lawsuit demonstrates the "power of the workers against



## INPRINT

## FICTION

## Forty years of Garcia Marquez

## Collected Stories

By Gabriel Garcia Marquez  
Harper and Row, 311 pp.,  
\$16.95

By Paul Skenazy

It is rumored that Gabriel Garcia Marquez has written more than 100 short stories that have not as yet been published. It's the kind of rumor one likes to hear, almost the kind Marquez himself likes to create in the fanciful biographical asides he provides for his characters. His receipt of the Nobel Prize coincided with the publication of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, a solemn, detached rendering of honor and revenge that managed to combine a respect for the rites of love with a soulful and humorous depiction of human folly. What else he has written in the nearly 10 years since the publication of *The Autumn of the Patriarch*—besides the reportage, the interviews, the addresses and the like—remains a matter for speculation.

While we wait and wonder, we have the chance, through the appearance of new translations and compilations of previously published pieces, to catch up with this most prolific and protean of artists. This present volume, *Collected Stories*, for example, contains no new work. All 26 stories have been available in English for several years. But for the first time, they are organized as they were in the three collections in which they first appeared in Spanish: *Eyes of a Blue Dog*, *Big Mama's Funeral* and *The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Eréndira and Her Heartless Grandmother*. Reading them in order offers the opportunity to see the development of Marquez' literary skills and imaginative range, and to fill in some of the gaps that separate an early, tentative novel like *Leafstorm* from the mastery of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *Autumn of the Patriarch* and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.

When Marquez' first stories were reprinted in pirated editions in the early '70s, he said he "would destroy them if he could get his hands on them." After plowing through five or six, this becomes understandable. And after reading all 11 of the pieces from *Eyes of a Blue Dog* one is left with little more than weary confusion. Written between 1947 and 1953 by a young man in his early 20s just beginning his career as a reporter, they are not merely confused or obscure, but self-conscious, self-indulgent and just plain bad.

These fictions present a nether world in which nothing is either dead or alive, everything is dreamlike and surreal and everyone is insufferably alone with their woes. Whole stories go by without a hint of dialog or any exchange (or even encounter) between people. The sentences are made up of massive

globes of words thrown against each other in a weighty search for "significance." They are dense with implication and devoid of life. There is little in the way of subject matter or story line, practically nothing of character or plot development of beginnings or endings. Marquez seems intent on representing a stage of introspection with no exit. Death is both one's deepest dread and darkest wish.

## Private hauntings.

By the early '60s, when Marquez wrote the eight pieces of *Big Mama's Funeral*, his private hauntings had found public form in the village life of Macondo and the unnamed small towns one finds in story after story. That form has to do with the distinctive stance Marquez takes to his characters: ironic and bemused, yet with an edge of wide-eyed wonder at the ways and wherefores of human action. His voice contains an almost cautionary warning against taking anything less than seriously or as more than just happenstance.

On occasion he will descend to satire, as in his wonderful evocation of how Big Mama "melts into her own legend" through newspaper accounts of her massive wealth, but he never condescends or mocks those engaged in the every-

day practice of their lives. He has learned to keep us blessedly far from the inner suffering and psychological discords of his fictional creations except as they turn into action or dialog.

This is the point in his career when Marquez turns into a storyteller. He discovers community life, in which women take in laundry and are kind to their lovers with cigarette packs, mourning mothers display their dignity by refusing to display emotion, adolescent women share talk of love while making artificial roses. He gets interested in how people cope in a world of neighbors, lovers and relatives—a world so small that there are no strangers who pass unnoticed. A world so intimate that a grandmother guesses a girl's pain by the number of times she visits the bathroom on a given

morning. It is a world so intricate in its social arrangements that the rich mayor must turn for relief from his abscessed tooth to a dentist who cries out to him with "bitter tenderness" as he pulls it that the mayor's pain is just payment "for our 20 dead men."

He begins to explore the power of money to kill and deceive. He writes of the curious revenges overt and ironic that come to an informer who grows rich on his betrayals.

## Folk realism and fantasy.

By the seven stories of *Innocent Eréndira*, most written in the late '60s, Marquez has learned to court that territory between folk realism and fantasy for which he has become so well known. He writes about wild, open-ended tales of winged old men who come mud-caked to earth, huge young drowned men called Esteban, seas that smell of roses and love and contain houses with flowers on the terraces. The stories seem to be parables, symbolic political messages, adages brought to life. But each fable is more suggestive than allegorical. They are about dreams and the power of the imagination to transform the known. They are about oppression and exploitation and the uneasy alliance of victim and victimizer.

These stories take place at a mysterious shore where the wearying heat of the desert confronts the depths of cruelty and the unknown but beckoning promise of the sea. They contain an inordinate number of showmen: smugglers, con artists, photographers, thieves, politicians and priests—the charlatans Marquez loves for the way they work our faith and greed, address our desperate desire to believe reality a bit more responsive than it generally is.

Like these illusionists, Marquez operates on our unacknowledged hope that life can still surprise us, our undeveloped optimism that still clutches at the possibility of radical transformation in our circumstances, our character and destiny. He nurtures such self-fulfilling possibilities by turning metaphor (the one remnant of magic our language preserves in daily life) into plot. He alters expectations, expands the sense of the possible, exorcises the commonness from the commonplace. Marquez offers twists of plot and deviations of character that overturn assumptions. He seems to encourage us to grow feverish on our illusions and find his playfulness infectious. His own artistic development from introspective submersion to materialism to the inviting later inventions is a suggestive model of just what can happen to someone who puts their trust in the imagination.

Innocent Eréndira is saved from her grandmother's persecution by a sadsack smuggler's son who steals his father's oranges, which have been cultured to grow genuine diamonds "stuck in the heart of the fruit." Who knows better than the artist, Marquez seems to imply, just what gems might be making their way across the borders of our own lives to rescue us too at this very minute?

Paul Skenazy teaches literature at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and regularly reviews fiction for *In These Times*.

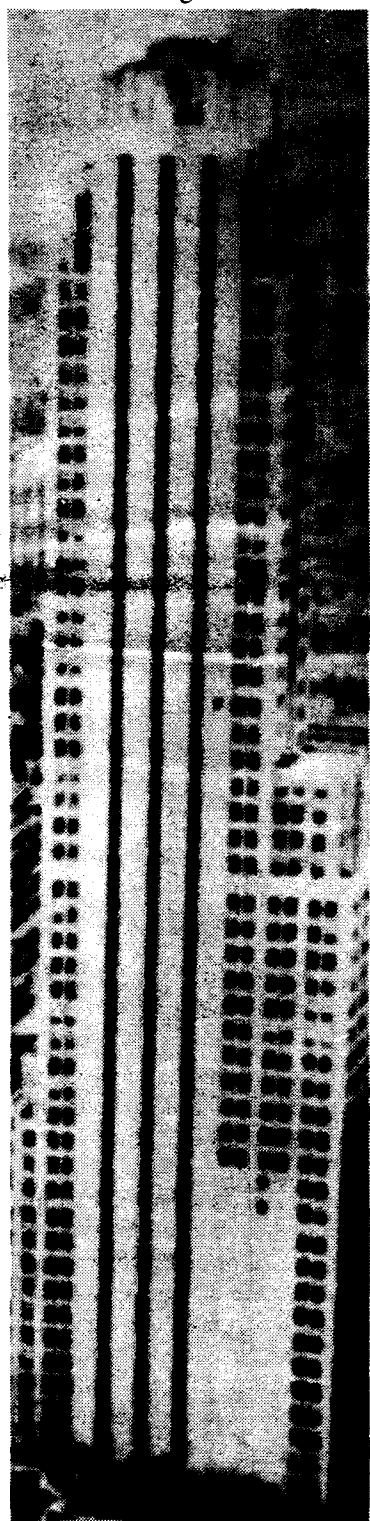
For the first time Nobel prize author Marquez's short stories appear in order and provide the chance to see his development as a writer.



Merrill Lynch's bull," but nothing about what actually happens (or has happened) at the center of the world capitalist system. Occasional reflections hit the mark, but most of what passes for critique is a little more than fey irony—thin and often inaccurate.

The comparison with the WPA book is perhaps unfair. The Glickmans don't have the essayists' freedom. They are prisoners of the inherently fragmented walking tour format, which makes it hard to convey broad understandings of the city. They are only two people, without the massive resources of the state behind them. And they are writing against the main currents of their time: Koch not LaGuardia is Mayor, and both the American Labor Party and public housing are dead.

But the failure is less of material and psychic resources than imagination and design. The WPA es-



says dig deep beneath the surface of the present in order to understand it; the *Red Pages* settle for a species of left antiquarianism. There is nothing wrong with commemorating heroes and victims (*New York Panorama* evokes "the riveter tumbled from his hawk's perch, falling voiceless and alone"). But left history must go beyond recollection and inspiration, and illuminate the roots of the current order, if we are to get on with the business of transforming it.

Mike Wallace is editorial coordinator of *Radical History Review* and is a director of the New York City Public History Project.



## By Pat Aufderheide

"Miranda," his voice was low as his hand slid under her hair, forcing her face up, "are you telling me the truth about yourself?"

It's not just Derek, or Beau, or Zach who wants to know. Corporate executives, professors and feminists are hard at work trying to figure out the realities behind a national lust for romance novels.

There may never have been a better time for romance literature, or "paraliterature," as some call it. Everywhere you look—on the "L," at lunch hour in offices, in suburban family rooms, on bedside stands at nursing homes—there are books with title like *First Love*, *Wild Love*, *Ann of Cambray* and *Secrets of the Heart*. Books that readers once hid from view now are brandished with abandon.

## Harlequin estimates that well over half the readers get through a book every two days.

Authors who used to type away in anonymity now go on talk shows—under their own names—and their husbands cheerfully answer interview questions as well. Romance writers gather at their own conventions, which are covered by the mainstream media, and they subscribe to trade publications such as *Romantic Times*.

This brisk trade in female dreams could be a clue, some people figure, to that perennial question: what do women want?

In 1980, Richard Snyder thought he knew. That was when he, as chairman of the huge publishing firm Simon and Schuster, decided to launch a frontal attack on 35-year-old Harlequin Books, then reigning queen of the romance fiction market.

Harlequin had pioneered the technique of selling formula fiction to women in grocery and drug stores. The genre was distinctive. Yes, these were boy-meets-threatens-loses-gets-girl stories, and yes, these were stories in which the women were objects of the action. But the point of view was the woman's. And the theme, invariably, was not that men conquer women, but that love conquers both misunderstanding and the will to dominate. The romances crossed space and time, but whether it was Scotland or France or colonial Virginia (never, say, Mozambique or East Germany), the setting was always the backdrop for affairs of the heart that, readers seemed convinced, were timeless.

The books have a broad readership, one that crosses cultural and class lines but that is anchored in a group of women who are white, married and working at least part time. They read with a speed and regularity that is astounding; Harlequin estimates that well over half of romance readers get through a book every two days.

Richard Snyder thought these women wanted more of what they were already getting, and he was willing to bet big on it. A new Simon and Schuster line, called Silhouette, was launched. Its

covers mimicked Harlequin covers, at least until a lawsuit forced some changes. And the company offered big-name Harlequin writers sizeable long-term contracts. The prize was Janet Dailey, known as "the woman with the golden fingertips," after she wrote 28 romances in four years, bringing in spectacular sales and a dedicated group of readers.

Silhouette also introduced variations in the formula, drawing on an emerging trend. In 1972, Kathleen Woodiwiss' *The Flame and the Flower* had broken the Gothic mold. In Gothics, the heroine—a distant cousin to Jane Eyre—struggled toward love and marriage with the head of a household where she had come as governess/maid/orphan/poor relative. By contrast, in the "spectaculars" that Woodiwiss' book inspired, the heroine was typically pitched into adventure by some man's mistreatment, and she then negotiated a romantic solution through her ingenuity. Capitalizing on this trend, Silhouette boasted that its books would combine "explicit sexuality and good taste."

Snyder thought he was starting a romance war, but what he really did was to open a Pandora's Box. Suddenly, every publisher wanted a piece of the romance market. And suddenly everyone had a new formula. Some ideas bombed; one line for "golden years" readers, called September Romance, never even got off the presses. But others, especially Dell's *Ecstasy*, Bantam's *Loveswept*, and Berkley's *Second Chance at Love*, did well. For a while, it looked like Harlequin's approach of "hard-core decency" would require a rescue mission from the Moral Majority to save it.

But competition for readers raised costs. Suddenly both Harlequin and Simon and Schuster were forking over \$20 million a year in advertising for products that had once sold themselves alongside detergent. Firms began selling books by mail order, and promoting romance book clubs that offered a free book for every six bought. One promotion offered a dozen books stuffed into a Hefty garbage bag. The cover price of single copies inched up.

Soon, as *Publishers Weekly* put it in an article aptly titled "The Romance Wars," "sensuality burnout" set in. Sales fell off, and both the original competitors started losing out to upstarts. Finally, in 1984 Simon and Schuster admitted it had lost and sold its line to Canada-based Harlequin, taking in trade some U.S. distribution rights. Today the romance market appears to be stabilizing at a higher level of readership than ever before. The industry estimates its share of the paperback market may be as high as 40 percent, with \$450 million or even \$500 million in annual sales.

But in the dark days before consolidation, when publishers were busy pointing fingers at each other and pouring over marketing surveys, writer Janet Dailey thought she could explain the source of their troubles.

"I think most publishers of category romance didn't realize they were dealing with a discerning reader," she said. She didn't blame writers for badly written books. New writers, she argued, weren't getting the necessary help from editors who were too eager to hustle new books onto crowded shelves to offer them guidance.

Romances are marketed by men with a close eye on the bottom

line. But they are written by women who typically believe in their own stories, and who write the kind of books they like to read. That, Dailey says, is how she started, and other writers agree. Author LaVyrle Spencer, for instance, wrote in a romance fiction newsletter that Kathleen Woodiwiss' *The Flame and the Flower* "possessed me to the point where I found I, too, wanted to write a book that would make ladies' hearts throb with anticipation." She wrote, "I even got to the point where I told myself I wanted to do it for her, Kathleen, to give her a joyful reading experience like she'd given me."

Like homemakers returning a casserole dish filled with a batch of cookies, the women share their appreciation of each other's understanding through new romances. If this seems an unusual attitude

for a commercial writer, it is only one of many unusual features of the romance fiction phenomenon. Between the lines of the stock stories, readers seem to find a solace that is almost spiritual.

One devoted reader wrote a thank-you letter to Harlequin books: "The heroine makes me feel it's a lovely world, people are good, one can face anything, and we are lucky to be alive. What a wonderful feeling! ...And if it wasn't for Harlequin, I'd never know this uplift."

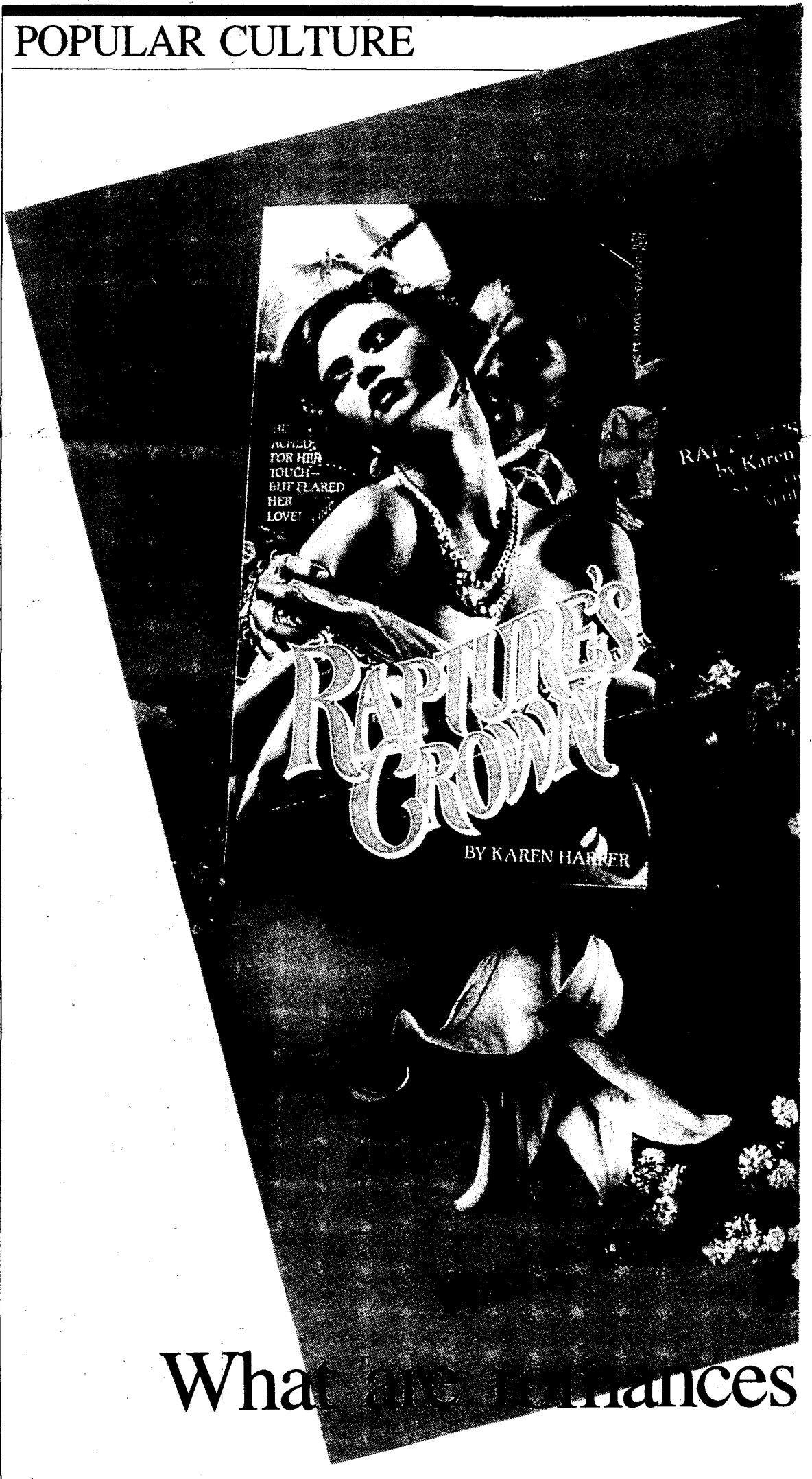
Most readers are not so eloquent, or perhaps so desperate as this reader. "I read them for escape." That's the first thing most women say when asked why they consume such quantities of printed sentiment. One housewife, who has been reading romances throughout her 35-year marriage, says the reason is simple: "Life

can be dull, and you'd like to do something exciting—take a trip, maybe. This is like travel, armchair travel; and you learn something, just like you would if you went somewhere."

Some social and literary critics suspect there may be more to this passion for passion than flight from tedium. They pin the evolution of the romance fiction market to the changing roles for women in modern society. Feminist literary critic Tania Modleski, in *Loving with a Vengeance*, finds that romances express for women anxiety about their identities in a state of dependency on a man. Romance fiction sales have grown—and formulas changed—with the growth of feminism, she notes; fiction may be bridging a growing gap between ideals of domesticity and realities of working wives and mothers.

## ART «» ENTERTAINMENT

### POPULAR CULTURE



# What are romances



Kate Ellis of Rutgers University, currently working on a study of women's romances, notes that as more women work away from home the domestic-oriented Gothic novel has fallen in appeal, and she finds in spectaculars a hint of women's liberation: "It is Cinderella who has the glass slipper firmly in hand, and she marries only the man whose foot it fits."

While Ellis heralds women's rights to fantasy, author Ann Douglas (*The Feminization of American Culture*) warns that romances cater to masochistic attitudes. Feminist Susan Brownmiller, in *Against Our Will*, asserts that romances are thinly disguised rape fantasies, "the product of male conditioning." In sharp retort comes Helen Hazen, who in her recent *Endless Rapture* maintains that romances uphold women's true nature, and show that "the

most important emotion women feel is love."

What would The Lady on the Couch—or in the office, or on the subway—say to all these theories? That was what sociologist Janice Radway wanted to know. Her curiosity peaked at the right time. Faced with a welter of new choices and painfully tight family budgets, romance readers were beginning to help each other out, forming reading groups and newsletters to review books in communities ranging from Connecticut to Texas to California.

In one small northeastern town, Radway found a bookstore employee who was also a romance fan and author of a newsletter, "Dorothy's Diary of Romance

*The frantic pace of romance literature has eased in recent years, but the field is still full.*

Reading." In that bookshop, she asked customers what women are escaping from and to when they read. Her conclusions were published last fall in *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature*.

Between glossy covers, it turns out, is "a room of one's own," as Virginia Woolf once described the basic requirement for women to become liberated. "Reading is just for me," one woman explains. "It's my time." So much so, in fact, that some husbands get irritated. When she reads while her husband watches TV, one woman says, her husband complains. "He feels shut out, but there is nothing on TV I enjoy," she apologized.

"For some reason, a lot of men feel threatened by this, very, very much threatened," says store employee Dot. She has found it takes around two years for the average husband to take pride in the fact that his wife reads books. She also says she understands men's hostility. "They want their wife to be in the room with them, and I think my body is in the room, but the rest of me is not."

This habit is no mere self-indulgence, the women claim. In fact, most of them say they feel guilty, both for spending money and for taking time away from their families. Many of them point out in their own defense that they are educating themselves while they read. One woman praises Harlequins because they "are so geographically correct." And in a novel about an eye hospital, "you learn about...the differences in nursing between the English and the American system." Others say they get recipe ideas from food descriptions. And Dot says of historical romances, "You don't feel like you've got a history lesson, but somewhere in there, you have."

But a thirst for knowledge doesn't account for why these women constantly need to read, enough to sustain output like Harlequin's 12 novels a month. Don't tell them they're addicted; one salesman referred to "the ladies getting a fix," and Dot nearly set him on his ear. But they do admit that reading is a kind of therapy. "This is better than psychiatry," Dot explains. Not that she wants to get away from her husband or kids. "It's just—it's pressure that evolves from being what you are." Romances can deliver what no woman could expect of her life. "I often tell my children," Dot says, "'In life there's what...you dream about, there's what you really want—and then there's what is laid out there for ya!'"

The women read, in fact, as if their lives depended on it. Radway began to wonder if in a way that weren't true. She looked at passages in romances like this: "In the fireplace, the dying coals fell with a soft crash, making Leonora start and tremble in her sleep, until he soothed her with the touch of his finger on her cheek and she slept again." And she looked at answers to one of her questions: Does the hero resemble anyone you know? The women almost invariably said, "No." And they spoke wistfully of men who could really be sensitive to women in the same way that women were sensitive to men.

Does this mean that Middle American moms have unhappy marriages? Radway doesn't think so. She does think that America's romance addiction may mean that even the happiest of traditional

families pays a high price for rigid roles. When there's an emotional division of labor, when mom is the nurturing expert, there is no one to nurture the nurturer.

However comfortable these bookstore patrons are in their private lives, there always seems to be something missing: the assurance that anyone at home can give them the emotional support they gladly provide. She suggests that what women may like so much about the happy endings of their stories is the way the hero loves the heroine, simply for existing. Romance novels may be where women get back the security they create for others at home and at work.

If so, the rising tide of romance novels could be a signal that women are feeling the strain more than ever. Certainly there's a hint of desperation in the story of how Nora Roberts—35 novels in five years—began her career: "One February I was stuck in the mountains with two small children, and I thought I'd go nuts. So I started writing instead." And certainly the recent history of romance fiction is the very opposite of the stable universe of values the novels' covers promise.

Inside those covers, the character of the heroine is changing, with full support from readers. Radway's bookstore customers say the characteristics of a heroine they most admire are intelligence, a sense of humor and independence. Popular writer Jude Deveraux goes so far as to call her novels feminist. "Do you want to read about women who are dominated and submissive?" she asked an audience at the third annual Book Lovers Convention this year. "My heroines rescue men, they lead armies, they have power."

Heroines are taking the initiative in remarkably racy tales. Sample this passage:

"I'll do whatever you want, Margarita. Do you want to wait?"

She didn't answer. Instead, she reached up and unbuttoned her dress and let it fall to the deck; unfastened her petticoats and stepped out of them; lifted the chemise over her head and threw it to one side. She stood naked before him.

The ship pitched gently and she let herself fall into his arms. With one hand around her bare waist, Jordan began to fumble with the buttons of his shirt with the other.

"Let me," she said....

For all the steam rising from the pages of the new fiction, no one seems to be confusing sexual license with independence. Radway's bookstore customers, for instance, like the more explicit description of women's feelings, but they are offended by novels they call "garbage dump books," "pornography" and "rape sagas." They sometimes buy such books, partly because the packaging doesn't offer much guide, and even if they dislike it most of them read to the end, arguing that they have been sucked into a story and must "read my way out." And when they get to the last page, they often sound the alarm, warning other readers away from the book and the author.

In short, along with their heroines, women readers are becoming bolder. Dot no longer has to repackage books so that no one will see the customer carrying home a tell-tale blue bag full of romance. Janet Dailey recalls, "When my first book was published in 1976, romance was in the closet. Nobody admitted read-

ing the books. Nobody admitted writing the books, and the publisher kept a low profile." Now, writing romance is so acceptable that such a novelist is the heroine of the recent popular film *Romancing the Stone*.

Dot's customers can see the changes happening to their books and they also think that the books are changing their lives. They think that reading books makes women more self-reliant and less timid, as well as building their vocabularies. Dot and a friend point to a frequent customer, who they say has learned to question her husband's king-of-my-castle attitude. She is still a responsible wife and mother, they are quick to emphasize; her life is the same, but her attitude is different.

It may, ironically, be the "bad" romance novels—the ones with too much violence and raunchy

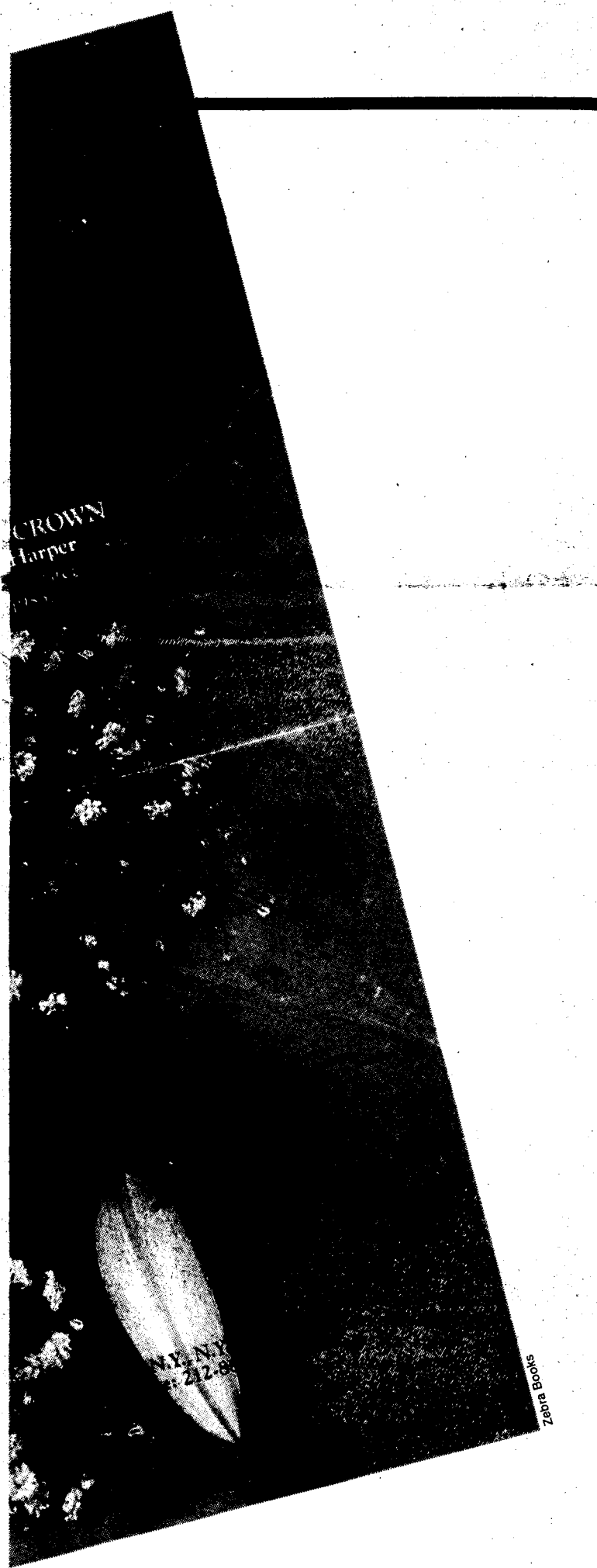
*Our romance addiction may mean that even the happiest of traditional families pays a high price for rigid roles. There's no one to nurture the nurturer.*

sex—that truly change lives, at least in the small town that Radway researched. When the women plow through distasteful books rife with violence against their heroine, the formula is violated. They are jarred out of their dream-world and sometimes draw unpleasant parallels to real life. Or, as Dot puts it, some women tell her they sometimes stop and think, "Hey, wait a minute—my old man kinda acts like this." That is the moment when the power of romance to patch over real-life needs really shows—when it doesn't work.

While women across the nation are taking 187-page vacations from their lives, marketers are busy dreaming up new product lines and exploring new markets. Along with a new range of sensuality for the core romance market, there are now romances for gay men, from a fledgling publishing house called Knight's Press. (The publisher bemoans the lack of manuscripts from lesbian women.) And religious publisher Zondervan has released a line of Christian romances. "Even her name suggested sweet innocence," announces the back cover of one such novel, "and Juliana had been waiting for Something to Happen, poised on the brink of discovery about life and love and God."

The Pandora's Box that Richard Snyder opened in the name of profit is not likely to be closed any time soon; accountants and editors are as eager to delve into it as are harried housewives and secretaries. Nor is the speculation about what it all means likely to end. After all, there those women are, poised on the brink of discovery....

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telling us?



# Africa

Continued from page 22

strengthen the black nationalist position within the ANC, to increase the likelihood of instituting majority rule without abolishing capitalism. But most ANC activists say they feel the nationalist position is in fact the moderate one in South Africa, where capitalism and racism have been so inseparable. Arguing that civil rights alone will not redistribute their country's wealth and power, they say that only a socialist reconstruction will satisfy the needs of the black majority. For this group—an undoubted majority within the ANC—negotiations like those in which Zimbabwe's liberation forces accepted majority rule with protection for private enterprise and capitalism would almost certainly be unacceptable.

## Democratic socialist program.

Although many older ANC leaders have long held a left-wing position, much of the support for a democratic socialist (rather than a straight nationalist) program comes from the ANC's younger activists and from its guerrilla fighters. Many of these left South Africa following the 1976 uprising and have received their political education and military training in ANC camps in Angola. Paradoxically, many of these younger activists came out of the black consciousness movement, which held that black

South Africans' primary task was to free themselves of the psychological shackles of internalized oppression. In practice, this meant that black activists formed separate organizations, refusing to work with white leftists.

Today, however, black activists inside and outside the country—with the exception of small groups like AZAPO, which has been roundly attacked for its opposition to Sen. Edward Kennedy's recent visit—have moved away from a strictly racial analysis of apartheid to one that incorporates class concepts. More and more, apartheid is seen as a radically defined system that produces cheap labor for big business—an analysis that leads almost inevitably to a socialist program.

It is difficult, of course, to tell how strong straight nationalist sentiments are within the ANC. The movement has been split over the relative weight of nationalist and socialist goals in the past, most notably when the Pan Africanist Congress was formed by a breakaway nationalist group in 1959, and more recently when a tiny group called the Africa Nationalists split off in the early '70s.

The question will certainly emerge again in the upcoming conference, probably during elections for the ANC's national executive committee. Most activists expect to see the election of a younger group, as many of the present NEC members have been guiding the liberation struggle for over a decade. But they also believe the NEC may be open for the first time to non-Africans. Although a few whites, Indians and so-

called coloreds have held important positions in the ANC, they have been excluded from the movement's top decision-making body by a rule that many left-wing activists feel contradicts the ANC's commitment to a nonracial future. Although few non-Africans are likely to be put forward as candidates, opening the NEC's membership would, as one activist put it, reflect "the ANC's attempt to bring together like-minded people of all races in united action as the nucleus of a future South Africa."

The conference is also likely to re-examine the ANC's military strategy, which until now has concentrated exclusively on economic and military sabotage. Despite an intensified military campaign since 1981, averaging one explosion a week over the past two years, remarkably few lives have been lost. Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the ANC's military wing, has blown up railroads, power stations, oil depots and police stations, but the attacks have been carefully timed to avoid killing civilians. Last year ANC President Tambo remarked that carbombs risked too many lives. Since then, no carbombs—formerly a favored method of attacking large targets—have exploded.

But in the last year the ANC has found it difficult to sustain lines of communication between the 2,000 guerrillas estimated to be inside the country and its leadership north of Zimbabwe. South Africa's unrelenting pressure on neighboring Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana, Lesotho and Zimbabwe has made those governments loathe to allow ANC guerrillas to pass

through on their way farther into South Africa. Although the ANC claims that most guerrilla actions are planned and executed inside the country, its leaders acknowledge that it has become increasingly difficult to supply and guide its fighters. Shootouts along South Africa's northern borders have become relatively common, and although South African defense force personnel have been killed in the fighting, the toll on the guerrillas has been high.

Popular violence, on the other hand, has reached new proportions during recent months, with frequent attacks on police stations, government buildings and black collaborators with the regime. The homes of so many black government appointees have been petrol-bombed that most have either resigned or moved into specially protected compounds to save their lives. While the ANC is widely given credit for most major acts of sabotage, and for many minor ones, there is little doubt that many recent attacks have been relatively unorganized and spontaneous.

In this context, the upcoming conference is likely to reconsider ANC military strategy, with an eye toward the changing conditions of the struggle. One possible, though probably unlikely outcome is an increase in attacks on "soft" targets—that is, white civilians or isolated farm houses. Until now, white shopping centers and theaters have been completely safe. And while the ANC is unlikely to declare all-out war on the white civilian population, such a possibility may well be discussed.

The government appears to hope that concessions—including most recently a pledge to drop restrictions on black property ownership in white-designated areas—will persuade the ANC to drop its military strategy. It seems more likely, however, that the conference will decide instead to increase the pressure, so that if talks ever take place it will not be the government but the ANC that negotiates from a position of strength.

Jan Payer writes for *In These Times* from southern Africa.

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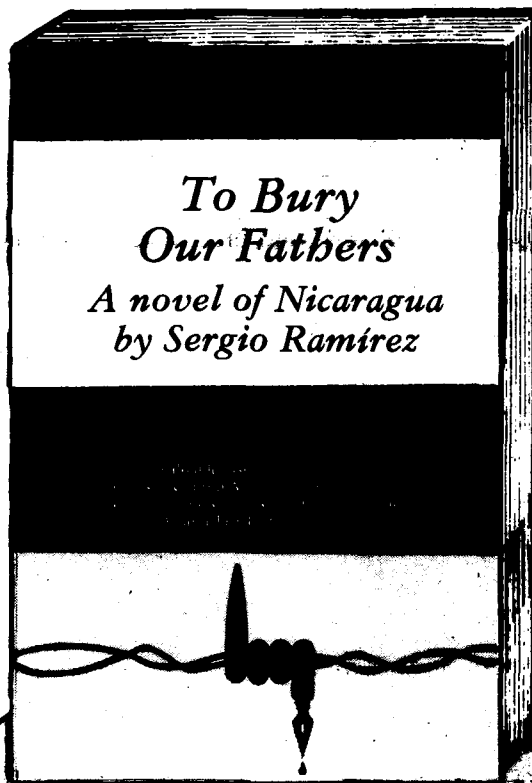
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# Movies

Continued from page 24

their troubles with wit and flair, who stand out against the bleakness, and humanize the valley's fight to survive.

Jimmy Roy, for example, is the star of Buba's 1975 film, *J. Roy's New and Used Furniture*. In the film, the mayor of Braddock is cutting a ribbon at the grand opening of Roy's furniture store, though there are no customers in sight. Roy says he's been broke 11 times, "but never bankrupt." A thin, attractive man who doesn't mind being told he sings like Frank Sinatra, he is the ultimate Braddock booster, just as sure that the town will come back as he is that this time, he'll make it.

This summer, Roy's store was still open, though the furniture seemed more used than new: in one window was an old wringer washing machine and in another a sad, faded green couch. But Jimmy Roy himself never looked better. He had a new business, selling jewelry, and he could be seen around town in a white suit, white shoes and a powder blue shirt and tie. His pockets were full of rings he'd bought at estate and bankruptcy sales, huge gold men's rings with trucks and oil wells on them, signs that times were not always this bad in the valley.

Roy, however, is a walking symbol of hard times overcome. There is a sign in his office: "Worry is an insult to God."

Another local fixture is "Sweet Sal," a veteran of Braddock's meaner streets and

the star of perhaps Buba's best film, made in 1979. It is a portrait of Sal, a bonier version of James Coburn, who years ago owned a candy store that fronted for his numbers operation. Sal was suave and tough: he sported alligator shoes and says he once put out his cigarette in somebody's hand.

Those glory days are gone forever, but Sal still puts on a good front: rapping in the film at a black bar, playing pool, bargaining a local store owner down a few dollars for a pair of jeans. He alternates between a smile and a sneer. But at the end of the film, Sal is at his father's grave, dusting off the stone, placing a child's Christmas card there, whispering, "When you left me, I gave up," and, "I don't know why Jesus Christ wants me to live." Heaven, says Sal, is a place where people are "still gettin' down, but gettin' down better."

Sal is the star of Buba's fiction film, which he has a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts to complete. Called *Lightning Over Braddock*, it is a surreal kind of fantasy-documentary, a half-comic, half-serious look at the relationship between a director and his star. In it, Sal gets to play a very continental version of himself, as well as Don Vito Corleone and Gandhi. It's about how a director becomes famous at his star's expense and how the star plots his revenge.

Of course, it's also about Braddock. Buba, who will have a show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in February, has chosen Braddock as his setting the same way James Joyce chose Dublin and Thomas Wolfe chose Asheville, N.C. In less than a square mile, he's found all the inspiration

he needs for his vision.

A friend says Buba walks around "with central casting in his head," thinking about how he can use the people that he meets.

These days Steel Valley is going through an identity crisis. High-tech promoters in the area proclaim, "Pittsburgh is no longer Steel City." Buba's films dignify the lives

IN THESE TIMES FEB. 6-12, 1985 23  
of the people who are not invited to that brave new world downtown.

**Mary Ellen Schoonmaker and Michael Hoyt** are New York-based freelance writers, who write frequently about labor issues. For more information on Buba's films, contact Tony Buba, 219 5th St., Braddock, PA 15104, (412) 351-4808.

## CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is **\$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions** and **\$15.00 for each additional insert**, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of **Cynthia Diaz**.

### NEW YORK, NY

#### February 8-10

"Where do we go from here?" Join Stanley Aronowitz, Harry Britt, Leslie Cagan, Noam Chomsky, William Sloane Coffin, Barbara Ehrenreich, Mark Green, Michael Harrington, Hubert James, Congressman John Conyers and Ruth Messinger for a national conference on directions for the student left. Plenary sessions on coalition politics; "deadly connections" of U.S. foreign policy, and the new politics of the university. Workshops on Central America, Socialist Feminism, Fighting the Campus Right, Economic Democracy, Labor Movement, Rainbow Coalition and more. Join us for a weekend of organizing and strategizing. Columbia University. Sponsored by Democratic Socialists of America Youth Section, 853 Broadway, Suite 801, NY, NY 10003. (212) 260-3270. Registration \$15.

#### February 8

Join the friends and members of NYCOSH (New York Committee for Occupational

Safety and Health) at our annual Valentine's Benefit Party on Friday, 8:00 p.m.-1:00 a.m., District 1199, 310 W. 43rd St. (off Eighth Ave.). Tickets \$7.00 in advance; \$8.00 at door. Dance, drinks, raffles, door prizes. For info, (212) 674-1595.

### CHICAGO, IL

#### February 9

Benefit Motown Valentine Dance with Terri Hemmert! for New El Salvador Today (NEST). Dance your heart away with WXRT's DJ Terri Hemmert. All proceeds for humanitarian aid to people of El Salvador. Crosscurrents, 3206 N. Wilton. Tickets \$5.00 in advance, \$6.00 at the door. Tickets available from: Waxtrax, Loop Records, Guild Books, Europa Books and Vintage Vinyl in Evanston. (312) 227-2720 for tickets and information.

### WASHINGTON, DC

#### February 21

Washington's premiere of *The Good Fight*, a documentary about the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and the Spanish Civil War. Benefit for DSA DC/Md. Panel with filmmaker and Brigade vet to follow. Feb. 21 at 8:00 p.m., Inner Circle Theater, 2105 Pa. Ave., NW. \$10.00 Tickets at the door, in advance at Common Concerns Bookstore, or reserve by writing DSA DC/Md., 1346 Connecticut Ave., #810A, 20036.

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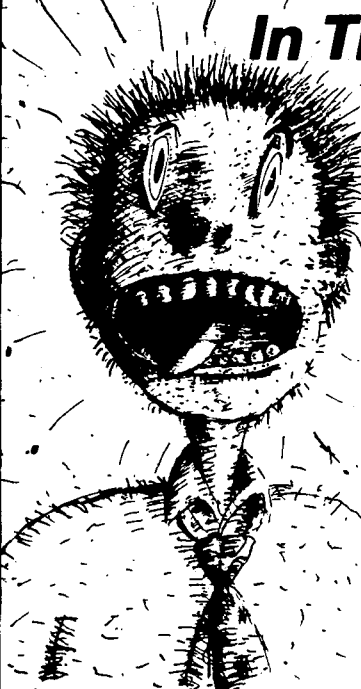
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SSteve Pelligrino, performing in  
the film "Mill Hunk Herald"By Mary Ellen Schoonmaker &  
Michael Hoyt

**T**HE MILL HUNK HERALD IS A scrappy magazine published in the troubled region near Pittsburgh known as Steel Valley and aimed at working people, mainly steelworkers. When Tony Buba, a filmmaker from Braddock, Pa., wanted to depict the *Herald* and its spirit, he filmed a party: young workers and their friends dancing like crazy to "Jumpin' Jack Flash" played on an accordion.

Then the party moves outside, where Buba has assembled the entire Braddock High School marching band, children in white and gold uniforms joining the accordion in a brassy version of the Rolling Stones' song. The band is playing together for the last time before the high school closes for good. Behind them, at the end of Braddock Avenue, dwarfing everything in sight, is the huge Edgar Thomson Works, the first steel mill Andrew Carnegie built in the U.S., now almost empty. The *Herald's* editor points to his Lech Walesa T-shirt, saying if Walesa can organize a whole country, they can galvanize Steel Valley. These scenes are all part of Buba's latest film, *Mill Hunk Herald*.

Welcome to Braddock, a dying steel town on the banks of the Monongahela River that Tony Buba's films have transformed into a symbol for the decline of the whole industrial Northeast. Braddock is Buba's hometown. He is the son of a mill worker and still lives next door to his parents. In a dozen films over a decade, he has tapped into both the pain and the pride of a way of life that is becoming obsolete.

Some 29,000 people worked in the six major mills in Steel Valley as late as 1979; it's down to 9,000 now. The area's economic depression has put thousands, by some estimates hundreds of thousands, of other people out of work as well, such as the

owners of small businesses dependent on the flow of income from the mills. Braddock Avenue, which once thrived as the valley's shopping district, is one long display of plywood. Meanwhile, U.S. Steel, which owns the six mills and has been slowly shutting them down, could hit close to a billion dollars in earnings next year, thanks to its diversification in real estate, chemicals and oil.

In *Voices from a Steeltown*, Buba's most recent film, a former librarian walks through the Carnegie Library in Braddock, one of three libraries Andrew Carnegie built for the valley as a gift to the workers who made him rich. Once magnificent, it stands in ruins today, and rain leaks in on rooms full of dusty books. Children take Buba on a tour of their former elementary school, now an abandoned building. People talk lovingly about the Braddock that is no

more: the Crystal Theater, the Famous Department Store, the crowds of shoppers that made Braddock Avenue impassable on Saturday mornings 20 years ago.

In a walk down Braddock Avenue last summer, Buba, a short, roundish, friendly man, pointed out the parking lot that was the site of his grammar school and the boarded-up men's store where he bought his suit for high school graduation. Buba said he knows only two people on his block with full-time jobs, himself included. "The American Dream," he says, "has been replaced by the lottery."

Steel Valley looks like some remote

wings of a great museum of American history these days. But Buba has a wonderful talent for finding stubborn signs of life among the ruins. The main characters in his prize-winning documentaries are all hustlers, small-time heroes who endure

Continued on page 23

T O N Y

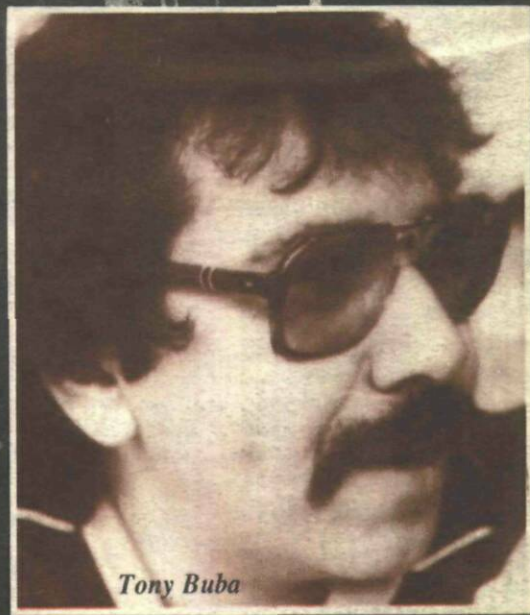
B U B A

finds

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Tony Buba